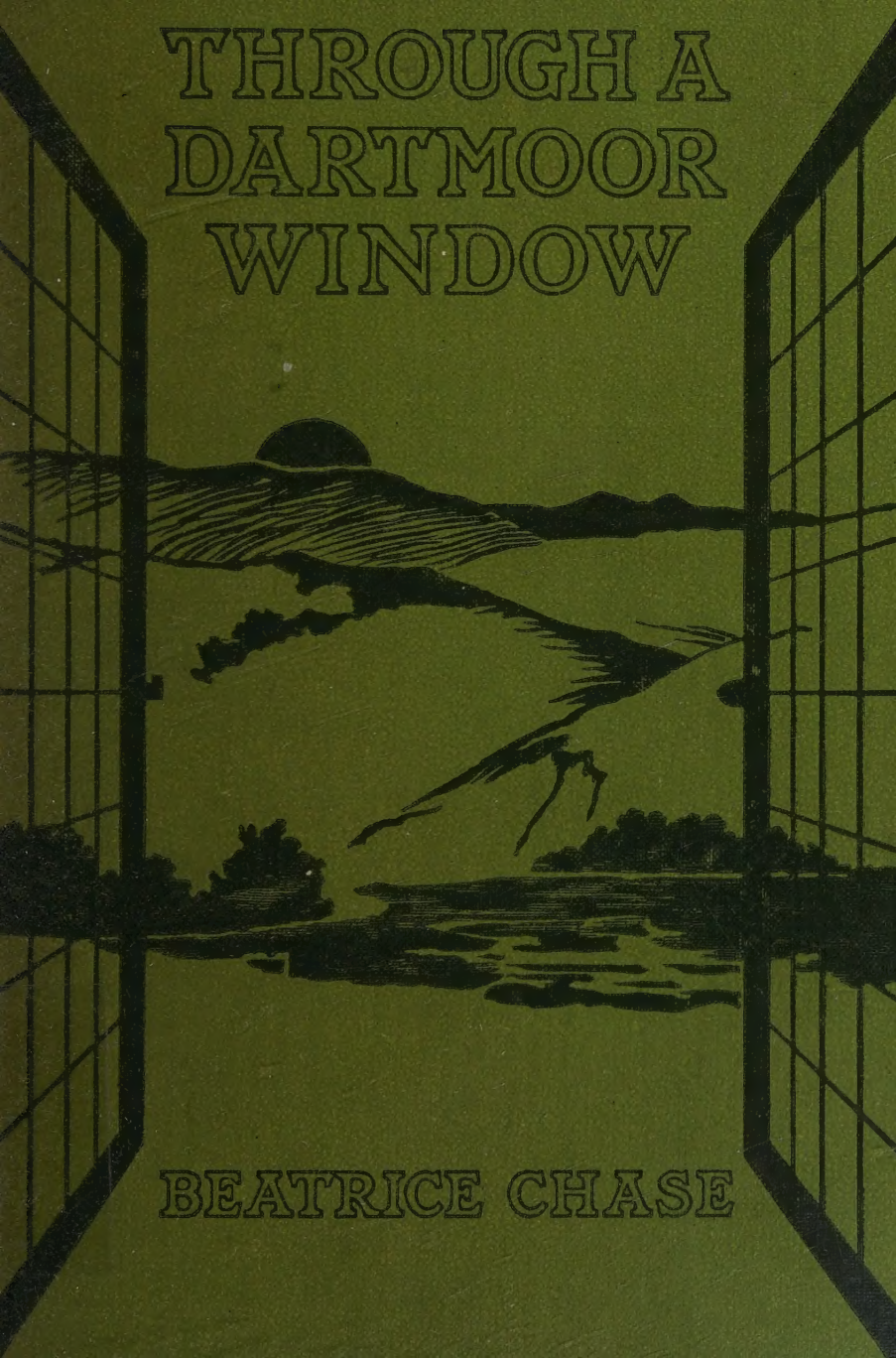
THROUGH A DARTMOOR WINDOW



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THE MAKING OF THE WINDOW

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

"PERHAPS some day 'Jemmy' will write again to Miss Chase and beg her to give us another book about Dartmoor. If he does, we earnestly hope that she will comply with his request. In the meantime, we shall keep *The Heart of the Moor* within easy reach and frequently return to its pages with a feeling of gratitude."

Thus, some kind and unknown man in *The Academy*, to whom I cannot adequately express my gratitude for his appreciation of my first Dartmoor book.

Not only this gentleman and "Jemmy" but many others, including various strangers, have invited another volume about the moor, and they have also begged to know more of my daily life here. It would be ungracious and ungrateful to ignore these requests—even if it were not a deeper joy to me to write about Dartmoor than it is to you to read.

I am warned by reviewers and others to have no plot in this book. It is amazing how frequently, during the past year, the average reader, especially

the woman reader, has said to me: "If only you Dartmoor writers would leave out plots and give us just the moor and your daily life and the people."

I feel strongly that the reading public has a right to demand the style of book it wishes to read. We writers are, or ought to be, the servants of the public and, after all, this feeling against plots is simply an echo of what "Jemmy," in his wisdom, wrote to me in the letter which made me so unreasonably and ungratefully angry.

"Never mind plot. People can get plots from the gutter press, the police news and the Divorce Court. What men want is atmosphere. Give us air, fragrance, sunlight, storm. Throw word pictures of the moor on the pages of your book."

I will do my utmost to obey you all, grateful to be commanded, proud to be your servant. Faithfully and literally, I will report to you of the great moor in her varying tempers, of her humble people, of my own intimate daily life lived so joyously within the haven of her vast encircling arms.

I have chosen to begin the book to-day. It is Mothering Sunday, and mid March. As is my custom, in fine weather, I am sitting out of doors in the lily bed, working bareheaded in the sunshine. My lilies—the great, tall, strong, white, dainty, fragrant, golden-hearted Madonna lilies—

are already five inches high and they look as lusty as a family of flourishing young cabbages. Round the corner, in the north bed, is a row of crocuses burning orange-gold against the dark earth. In a few days more, I shall pick the first daffodil. The fruitful heart of Mother Moor is already bringing forth her treasures of white and gold.

In Homer Mallow field there is another phase of motherhood. Homer Mallow, it may be remembered, is the field which James West was ploughing while I wrote *The Heart of the Moor*. By now, its riches have revolved to the root crop, and if any artist would come and paint that field today, he would make his name.

It stands high above the other fields and its brown and rounded breast is covered with myriad specks of white—roots broken up small for and by the flock. It looks as if some benevolent giant had been scattering innumerable great pearls all over the deep brown surface. Among these pearls and on them, the sheep feed, with their lambs. The ewes have, until lately, been, as usual, in the lowlands down about Marldon, among the good red earth of glorious Devon. Consequently each " dame " with her magnificent ruffled fleece might be an image exquisitely carved in pink coral. The lambs are born here so they are white—pearl again, beside their coral mothers.

The whole picture is flooded with pale gold sunlight and is set against a background of tors wreathed in the opal-tinted veil of smoke from swaling fires whose incense rises upon every hillside.

All the moor-world today is peace, and light and joyousness, and rich with the incomparable treasure of Motherhood whether vegetable, animal, human or spiritual, for motherhood has many wondrous and often unsuspected phases, as I have learnt since I came to dwell on the great Mother Moor.

So it is of set purpose that I have chosen to begin my book today—the great feast of motherhood—because the bringing forth of a book is one phase of spiritual motherhood.

Each book is a spirit-child of its author's heart and brain—a spirit-child clothed in the robe of white type-embroidered paper which makes it materially visible to the eyes of all mankind.

B. C.

March 14, 1915.

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THROUGH A DARTMOOR WINDOW

CHAPTER I

OTHER WINDOWS

THE literary device of the window has been often done before. One may almost say it has been overdone.

But I venture meekly to plead that my window will have special advantages hitherto unknown.

To begin with, we built the window. No other author has done this, unless I am mistaken.

Further, all my books are written in that very window.

Into no other window does the Tweed Dog sit and gaze from morn to noon and from noon to night.

Last and greatest, in no other window does the Rainbow Maker sit, weaving her beautiful work out of the hours of pain.

Be patient, please. Our motto here, as I have previously explained, is "Tomorrow's coming."

The Rainbow Maker will have her due chapter in the book as it unfolds. Till then, I will only explain that she is my mother.

My plan is this: to tell you the origin of the window, of what I see through it, and of those who pass it by, but not to limit it to these things, for you want other messages and wider word pictures of my moor than this would be.

So, for all the rest, please take it as thoughts which I send to you through the Dartmoor window, you in the lowlands, the great cities, the alien countries where you long for news, however trivial, from the great moor which is the fruitful heart of peerless Devon.

CHAPTER II

THE MAKING OF THE WINDOW

THERE are few joys to equal the joy of owning an old house, however humble.

It is in itself, a book without an end. This joy is ours.

It was built in the days when machinery was still rare and costly. And it was fashioned by a race of men who did and do use only the most primitive tools.

Consequently, every inch of the house is hand made. This, in itself, is a history.

Besides this, there are the generations of people who have lived in it, been born in it and died in it. It is sweet to wander from room to room listening to the wordless stories of love and life that each tells.

On the other hand, there are few joys to equal that of building your own house. This joy, too, is ours.

You cannot compare them because they are on different planes, and each has its own unique sweetnesses.

We began life here in the old cottage. Then, it became necessary to add to it in order that the place might be our only home.

Picture what this decision meant to anyone as moor mad, as hopelessly in love with Dartmoor as I was. It meant no more returns to the poisonous city, no more illnesses consequent thereon, no more ebbing of vitality till the annual date when my life would once again be renewed by Mother Dartmoor. It meant home—home for life among the hills and tors, a home from which I need never be absent one night, from which no landlord could dislodge me.

The building began early one March. We were here from the beginning to the end—from the day when the ground was cleared and the foundation-stone laid, onwards to the day in September when our faithful workmen shouldered their tools and departed, sorrowful, because the happy six months of daily life together was ended. I remember how the Rainbow Maker and I sat on the step and watched them go through a mist of tears.

It was she who drew the plan for the new wing. We had no architect, no contract and consequently no contractor. We were limited as to ground and constrained as to height on account of joining the annex to the old cottage, so the plan was comparatively simple. On the other

hand, these limitations were not always easy to handle.

The staircase was the chief difficulty. I am told that staircases always are. Perhaps that is why one never sees a staircase in a doll's house.

A staircase takes a disproportionate amount of room, on account of what the men call "the fall" of the stairs, and it is, also, a most difficult thing to calculate for the amateur architect.

It has a way of lengthening out and bursting up like an ill-tempered serpent in the middle of a best bedroom instead of modestly terminating on the prepared landing.

The kitchen chimney was another architectural trouble. We were adhering to the old-fashioned style of chimney which is the size of a small tower. You can sit or stand in the hearth and look straight from there up at the stars.

The lintel over the fireplace is a solid block of granite seven feet long which it took four men to lift into place.

Each similar difficulty was overcome by the Rainbow Maker and our faithful workmen. We had nine men, carpenters, masons and the all-important thatcher.

First, of course, the walls rose in the rough—walls of solid white granite, with the spaces left for the windows like portholes in a tower. I was

never tired of stealing in, after the men had gone for the day, to look at the different views through these gaping apertures. It is impossible to describe the joy of focussing old views through new windows, of alternately stooping and craning to see if this field or that old tor friend will be visible from some given room.

In due time came the excitement of the bedroom flooring. The staircase appeared very late on in the general scheme, consequently I mounted by a ladder to the upper storey long before the Rainbow Maker was able to explore it.

The roof was the most anxious bit of work, because, to join it to the other, a portion of the old cottage had to be unroofed. This was the portion which covered my bedroom. The men slung up "wim-sheets" over the wooden framework of the roof by night, but, nevertheless, it was a horrid feeling that there was nothing but this and a layer of plaster between you and a Dartmoor thunderstorm.

A still worse sensation was the knowledge that there was nothing but the same layer of plaster between you and the thatcher.

At the earliest epoch, my harassed mind awoke to horrid visions and I drew aside our head workman, desiring comfort.

"William," I began, confidentially, "suppose

the thatcher missed his footing one morning and descended like a new kind of shooting star through my bedroom ceiling, what should I do?"

I was soothed to find that William saw nothing funny in it. On the contrary, his face became lined with care.

"Her must be careful, that's all about it," he remarked, with considerable asperity. "I'll tell 'en not to drop his beetles or mallets and things."

"I don't mind beetles—not his kind of beetle, at least, or mallets either. What I should object to would be himself," I pleaded.

William gazed at me till the full horror of the possible situation had possessed him. Then he departed, without a word, to find the thatcher.

The first morning, I lay still, trying to be brave, but at the first ominous clump overhead, I shot from my bed, like a hunted rabbit, snatched my garments and made a hurried toilette on the landing. After that I was up and dressed every morning by 6.30 until that section of the roof was completed.

I have already explained that we had no contractor. Naturally, up-country people, hearing of our madness, bombarded us with good advice. They urged on us with more force than politeness the monumental folly of exercising no control whatever over the men in the matter of either

time or materials, especially as we were two helpless women with no man to look after us.

They need not so have cautioned us. It was just this very fact which made each workman constitute himself our natural protector.

People accuse me of idealizing, but what can I do except tell the naked truth?

The head man explained the situation one day to the Rainbow Maker in one pregnant sentence.

"You'm a widder, mum, and Miss Beatrice be fatherless and us knoweth well what the Bible tells us 'bout our duty to the widder and the fatherless."

On that, they acted consistently throughout. They made no fuss. They did not profess to be pious. They were surprised when we praised them. But they treated us, from first to last, as I hope and pray they and theirs will be treated all their lives long.

If they were given an order which they considered involved unnecessary expense, they expostulated. If we persisted, they explained the cheaper way. If we still persisted and said we didn't mind, they said they did mind and they were not going to rob us. And they didn't.

There was one old man in particular, long past work but who was an expert without whose advice, the building literally could not have been

done. He was very frail and very suffering, but he hobbled over day after day, and stood about in the bitter wind, giving directions to the younger men. It was absolutely unobtrusive. He did it as a matter of course. When the building was completed and the men were receiving their richly deserved little extra presents for faithful service, the Rainbow Maker sent a small cheque with a sweet letter of thanks to this same old man, explaining that it was nothing like the worth of his services, but she hoped we might be allowed to make him this grateful little recognition. Besides being unable to work he had very heavy sickness in the house with all its terrible expenses and we were glad to think he had been able to earn even a little, during the months of building.

An hour or so after the note was dispatched, he arrived.

He walked straight in, wearing his old work-a-day clothes. He hadn't stopped to tidy or even clean up. He walked straight in, glared at us both, flung the cheque down on the table and demanded—

"I've come to know what that be for. What I done for 'ee was done for love, and I bain't going to take your money."

I have told this story many times as an example of the men of Dartmoor. One person to whom I

told it entirely declined to believe it. To such, there is nothing more to be said. All that is left is to pity them.

In two other instances, humble working men passed by and stopped to watch the building. They foresaw a possible piece of unnecessary extravagance on our part and drew us aside to explain, with endless apologies, that it was no affair of theirs and they hoped we should excuse the liberty, but if we were going to do a certain thing, the best way to do it was so and so, if we would not be offended. How *can* a mere helpless woman thank these great gentlemen? I never know.

Curiously enough, the Dartmoor window itself was the only thing about which we had a difference of opinion with the men and was the only point on which we stood out for our own way. At an early stage it became apparent that there would be a bit of blank wall at a certain corner, which would be vastly improved both outside and in by a tall, narrow window in it. The men objected first because they said it would be too near the ground outside, as the bank rises. We ruled out this idea, and the Rainbow Maker decided to have the window set in a rounded wall instead of a square-cornered angle. She wanted the wall rounded like a tower. This brought a volley of protest. No such thing had never been done

in the place before. 'Twould look squint-eyed. 'Twould be enough to frighten the horses coming round the road. And so on. The Rainbow Maker was firm and I backed her. It was done with groanings by the masons and more groanings from the carpenter who had to slope or curve the wood-work of the window to fit the rounded corner—no doubt rather a difficult feat, but he did it to perfection. When it was done, the head man was found contemplating it one day with his head on one side.

"I reckon that window don't look so bad after all, mum," he admitted, handsomely.

And the world at large agrees enthusiastically.

When the building was done, then came the joy of moving in, of taking possession of each room, of lighting the first fire on the great granite hearth, of loving each queer angle and slope and perspective which had, like a live thing, arranged itself.

Like the old house, every bit of the new one is hand-made by skilful, honest, moorland hands, and there was not one inch of it, from the foundation line to the roof ridge, which we have not watched in the making.

It is formed throughout of Dartmoor granite, so the walls sparkle in the sunlight and the moonlight as if powdered with diamonds. The Dart

herself has mingled her being with Mother Earth's, for the sand used in the foundations of the house and in the cement floors was water sand brought from the bed of the Dart. The men procured it to mix with the cement because water sand is as hard again as ordinary sand.

So half the material of the great square of cement (called the "damp foundation") on which the first stones rest came, dripping, from the Dart, that moorland river with the unique legend—

> "River of Dart! River of Dart,
> Every year thou demandest a heart."

And in the seasons when the Dart cries, like a living thing, for her toll of a human heart, I like to think that the mysterious wailing is echoed from the very foundations of this house, even if human ears are too dull to hear the plaint.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

From a photograph by Chapman & Son, Dawlish

CHAPTER III

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

BEFORE it was finally decided whereabouts we should build, one of our tenants expressed his opinion, respectfully but quite plainly, that we ought to withdraw to a distant field belonging to our own farm, build therein a square, conventional slated house, plant before it a row of shrubs, and live in refined aloofness from the common herd in the farmhouse and the cottages. We differed from him politely, but violently. Since then, he has thought nothing of us and has treated us with a well-bred pity. His idea defined the proper manner in which "gentry" ought to live. Our idea cannot be expressed in decent language. For one thing, it is a mystery.

He cannot understand why ladies should like to be near a farmyard teeming with cocks, hens, calves, pigs, cows, dogs, cats, turkeys, and other live stock when it is possible to get away from these things. Neither can he understand why we should cling to a queer old cottage with a wing added to it, and windows facing the four points of the compass when we might have an

orthodox and entirely new house. Worst of all, why should we, if we really are "gentry," like to live a large section of our lives absolutely plump upon the high-road to be stared at by every common wayfarer?

His objections are our three strongest attractions and, judging by the perennial enthusiasm of many passers-by, the majority of opinion is with us.

To begin with, there are few more cheery objects in nature than a thriving farmyard. Life on a farm can never be stagnant or monotonous simply because of the hordes of various forms of organic and vegetable life which a farm supports. We are far enough not to be disturbed by it, near enough to enjoy the stir. All the bedrooms, for instance, look either over the fields or the moor, yet if we desire the racket of farmyard life, we have only to step to the other side of the house, whose curious ramblingness is its chief charm. It is not every house that looks north, south, east and west, thus enabling you to choose your aspect according to hour and season.

As for the publicity, well, no one would think that the white, narrow, leisurely road which saunters along in the sunshine between two high, flower-starred hedges is the high-road to almost everywhere and that by it the main traffic of the village progresses. Along it comes the morn-

ing mail from the far-off town. That is the first excitement of the day, except on market day when a farm cart or two is off and away before the arrival of the postman. This weekly little procession is soon over and we settle down cosily again, thanking fate that we have not to face the horrors of streets, until evening brings them home once more at a slower pace than they set out.

The weekly butcher and the bi-weekly baker pass this way. All the farm traffic saunters under the windows. Everyone who goes by is known to us, together with every member of the family even to the collateral branches, and if, now and then, a stranger does come, think of the thrill it causes! We leave everything and gaze, for it may be anyone from a disguised convict to a bishop in mufti. And if the traffic is of unfading interest to us, so are we to the traffic. The natives are always pleased to see the building wrought by local genius, and most of them are mildly charmed to greet us when feasible with shrewd remarks about the unfailing weather.

Strangers arriving unprepared round the corner anchor, raving, at our homely picturesqueness. They prattle about the fat blue jug full of flowers or the mawkish row of hyacinths in the old-fashioned glasses. The feminine stranger yearns to know where we get our willow pattern cretonne

curtains which match the willow china; the masculine tourist desires to sketch or photograph some door or window or angle.

Except in the intolerably bitter weather, we never shutter or curtain any window, for the illuminated interiors make the sweetest pictures of all and the lights of the house can be seen from many distant places. It would have been lamentable to deny these joys to humanity and to retire, veiled in shrubs, to a remote field!

Moreover, our tenant overlooked the most desirable attribute of the window—its utility. Countless are the little transactions performed through it. Orders are given to tradesmen, friendly carts are pulled up on their way to the lowlands and charged with requests to rescue a belated parcel from the station. We are one of the few villages still left in England that has no carrier of any kind. Bunches of flowers float in, propelled by kindly hands. Advice is asked as to minor ailments and salves and potions are handed forth to the sufferer. Sometimes, cheques are passed out and change is handed in. The men on horseback are the cleverest, for they sidle their cobs broadside on against the wall and sit in the saddle discoursing to the Rainbow Maker as she sits on the window bench a little above them. When the hunt goes by, some friend or other will deftly

steer his or her horse's head in at the casement and a velvet-like nose will appear suddenly among the crockery.

If the Rainbow Maker, when left alone in the house, suddenly discovers some lack, she merely opens the window and announces it in general terms to the breeze. Someone hears her plaint and delivers it to the proper quarter. In this manner, she sends messages many miles and it saves much correspondence. Upon one occasion, she was heard bemoaning her need of a load of firewood. A day or two later, a thumping load arrived from a strange farmer whom her wireless request had duly reached. She did not know where to get the wood so she sat in the window and said she wanted it, till someone who did know, heard and sent it.

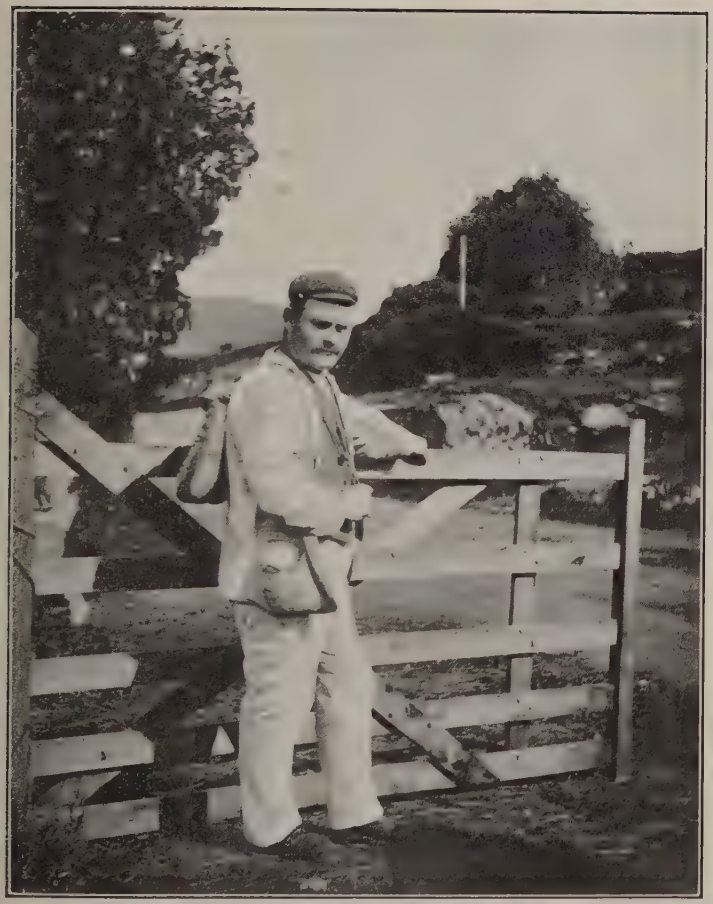
Upon another occasion, I expressed in vague terms a yearning for a bunch of Michaelmas daisies which I entirely forgot a day or two later. On Michaelmas Eve, I was typing alone in the dusk after dinner and received the shock of my life when a man's voice, apparently in the room, suddenly made some unintelligible remark.

I jumped out of my chair with one leap of horror, and there was the very man himself who made the window, standing on tiptoe outside it with his head and one arm in the room—the hand

grasping an immense bunch of the coveted daisies. They were packed together as neatly and as tightly as a bundle of faggot wood, and were tied with many coils of fine rope securely knotted. It was the most pathetically masculine bouquet I ever received in my life; he had picked them, arranged them, tied them and carried them down his very own self. In passing, he had noticed that the window was unlatched so he simply opened it and handed the flowers in. It took my two hands to encircle them. They filled every possible vase in the house and lasted weeks.

Besides the intercourse with humanity, there is another world seen from the window, the world of tors and moor, of woods and fields.

Four tors, all dear old friends, gaze serenely down upon us by night and by day, year in and year out. Several of our own fields, each with its own special charm and peculiar treasure, run to the other side of the narrow road where they stand, looking in. The road is so narrow and the fields so raised that the animals are almost in the rooms. In fact, during the seasons when the cows are quartered in the home fields, we have to descend to the language of the London policeman and remark "Move on there," for their majestic red forms darken the room. When hay carts pass we suffer a total eclipse.



THE MAN WHO MADE THE WINDOW

But the beast of all beasts is the Tweed Dog who lives, voluntarily, by the window, morning, noon and night. She has worn a large patch of the bank entirely bald with her dear white pads and thumping, tweed, white-tipped tail. For years now, she has sat there, watching me or the Rainbow Maker as we type. She has made herself the laughing-stock of the village, though little she cares for that. Farmers, on their way to market, smile at her indulgently. Strangers, seeing her for the first time, turn the corner and embrace her fervently. She is an exceedingly kind dog to strangers, never barking at anyone—except a sweep. But the very instant she sights a sweep, she proceeds to kill him then and there. As we sit inside and she sits outside the window, our eyes are about level. Outsiders marvel at her rapt gaze. She always sits bolt upright, holding her head rather high, and if I happen to get my decorations a little taller than is correct, she cranes over them and round them and through them, till they are duly altered.

The thatcher has been recently working here again. After several days of observation from a convenient roof, he remarked to me, awestruck—

"I've been wondering, Miss, how much time a day her puts to that window?"

CHAPTER IV

INSIDE THE WINDOW

As I have already stated, all my books and letters are written in the window, except when I write out of doors.

The thickness of our walls makes window seats whether or not they wish to be made. When you have to tunnel through a wall two feet thick, you make the window opening and a deep recess at the same time. This is the chief joy of thick walls. One visitor who stays here says that our window seats ruin you for ordinary modern houses. They are just the height to sit on, particularly if you want a specially good light; and then, too, they make such alluring tables. It is amazing the amount of things that a window seat will hold.

The seat of *the* window is exactly level with my elbow as I sit typing and is therefore just the height to be convenient for my paper. Flowers always bear me company, whether in the fat blue jug or in the hyacinth glasses. At this moment, the hyacinths are in full bloom and their scent is intoxicating. They are a red and a white and a

INSIDE THE WINDOW

From a photograph by Chapman & Son, Dawlish

blue, and it is not possible to say which is the prettiest. I pour fulsome adulation on each alike. All the window panes are Queen Anne, everywhere, green outside and cream inside, so either view makes a flattering background for flowers.

After dark, a powerful lamp stands in the window as I write, and throws a broad shaft of light across the road to the field wall opposite.

The villagers passing by are well used to the spectacle. They take a keen interest in the typewriter which, almost needless to explain, was the first ever to appear here. I sometimes explain its intricacies to the uninitiated and they never can make out why the letters come in the right place.

They take a much milder interest in the books which the typewriter produces, and their healthy-minded indifference to authors is too refreshing for words. They almost agree with my reiterated opinion on the subject: "Any fool can write a book and most fools do."

Their main emotion must be that it surely is frightfully hard work. This criticism is interesting, seeing that, in other parts, people regard book writers as the idlest of creatures. Here it is the contrary. They urge on me, continually, not to break my health down "over they books." And impress on me that too much head work is "tarble

trying, sure 'nough." I sometimes wickedly ask them if they speak from experience, which very mild joke is always received with disproportionate zest.

Till I lived here, I always believed the commonly credited theory that if you put a person into a book, no matter how flatteringly, he never speaks to you again. The moor folk are too sublimely superior to what a mere author may say of them to care at all. Now and then they look at some Dartmoor novel, amused, and remark, "Her do make us out tarble wicked, don't her, Miss?"

("Her" is used indifferently for both sexes.)

They are so entirely sure of the unlikeness of the picture that, beyond a certain faint amusement, it rouses no emotions in them. Lately, I have been very bold and have told three men, plump, that I intend to put them into my next book. That is this book.

They are all tickled beyond words.

The moment I state the fact, they begin to laugh. Then I burrow.

"Do you mind?" I ask, first.

"No fey, Miss."

"But don't you mind what I say about you? Suppose I say horrid things?"

"Say what you like, Miss," still roaring with laughter. "It don't make no difference."

"But wouldn't you like to see your chapter before it is published?" I plead, to secure one spark of self-respect.

"Ah, no, Miss. I should like a copy of the book when her comes out if so be as you could spare 'en. But don't 'ee trouble 'bout nothing else."

I never can analyse this marvellous indifference. If I were sufficiently conceited I should think it arose from blind faith in me. But that is inconceivable. I always attribute is to the opposite—lofty contempt for my powers, the kind of amused attitude with which they would watch a child attempting to do a big man's work.

Or else they are so well aware of their own worth that it matters not what adverse criticism may be made of them.

But fancy me if some author met me, one day, with a similar announcement. I should at once protest. Then I should want to know for what rôle I was cast. Finally, I should insist on every word being submitted to me before publication. Well, well. It is only another instance of the superiority of the Dartmoor folk.

I was once sitting out in the sun correcting galley proofs. It's a silly thing to do even with page revise. Every author knows the eel-like propensities of the galley proof, even indoors out

of the wind. I was suffering much for my folly but was too obstinate to forsake the sun, when an old farmer came by and laughed at my struggles. I exclaimed, "Don't come tormenting me. I've got troubles enough without you. Go away or I'll put you in a book."

He cocked an impudent eye at me over one shoulder as he moved off. "You can't do that. I bain't afraid. There was never no book printed, big enough to hold I."

He meant it literally as a joke. I took it seriously as an allegory.

This feeling oppressed me while I was writing *The Heart of the Moor*. I kept wondering if I were really doing them and the moor justice or whether my profane touch rendered them petty and small.

Every author and artist and musician feels weighted with his own inadequacy of expression. His creation never accords with his ideal of it. A clever man once told me that, if it did, there would be no ideals. If the star were within reach, the moth would never strive after it.

I fretted myself for a long time at the old farmer's jest.

So the natives now are well accustomed to see me working in the window by daylight or lamplight.

The great open fireplace, by the way, has sweetly arranged itself exactly opposite to the window. It looks as if we had purposely done it for effect. We did not, because there was no other place for the hearth. The result is that wayfarers look in through the flowers at the blazing logs and red-hot turf and it is impossible to describe the sweet and homely effect given by the sight of the fire as one turns the corner.

Under the window I have planted groups of daffodils, the beautiful trumpet narcissus with its wax-clear centre and lovely pointed yellow outer petals. It is so sweet to watch them stretching up and tapping gently against the lowest pane as I write.

The Tweed Dog is very careful of my daffodils, bless her. She has never broken one yet—any more than a cat ever breaks china when it leaps suddenly on a strange shelf.

The Rainbow Maker shares the same corner with me. Her desk stands at my right hand. Her angels run to the very window frame. She has a passion for angels and her corner is crammed with lovely groups of coloured Fra Angelicos whose black and white and gold frames show conspicuously against the white walls.

The other glory of the room is the big black dresser laden with blue willow pattern china which

our window curtains match exactly. People here have a passion for blue china and every woman in the village wants our dresser. I shall never forget the day when the Rainbow Maker first discovered the cretonne. It is an exact reproduction of the design on the china, exact as to both colour and size. The first good dame who received it as a present nearly went mad for joy. She made it into what they call here "a chimney screen," that is the pretty little flounce which runs across the top of the big fireplaces, and it was such a treasure, she kept it for the summer months when fires were less frequent and less smoky.

To complete the effect of our room, the Rainbow Maker presented me with a muslin "rest gown" in willow pattern muslin, and when I masquerade clothed as though in blue and white china, she declares it is the last touch to the room.

By that dresser hangs a jest. At the epoch when we were moving in, before the blue china arrived from London, the dresser became a refuge for all homeless articles. Unthinkingly, we kept loading it up till I awoke suddenly to its condition which was such that I sat down on the spot and described it. I copy that description verbatim with a feeling of profound thankfulness that, never again, can we go through such an epoch of chaos.

Inventory of Dresser Adornments on one of our gayest days.

On the top shelf: one match tidy; one large flower jug; one small cream jug; one half-eaten loaf of bread; another flower jug.

On the next shelf: three spiritual reading-books; one prayer-book; one half-eaten pat of butter in a glass dish; one nutcracker; a medley of keys and padlocks, hurled down in wild confusion; one bottle of liquid gold paint; one dejected thermometer registering 57 degrees.

On the bottom shelf: one small oil lighting lamp; one bottle of Blaud's iron pills; one rag; two clean plates; one ditto knife; one brass tray; one sock; a small bracket; a bottle of vinegar; a clock registering 3.45.; a treacle tin containing some half-melted chocolates; a set of shoe trees; a blue mug containing paste; one old toothbrush.

N.B.—This would make an admirable French exercise. The articles have been given in their order. Not one is standing straight.

To look at the dresser now, would you ever think it?

A certain London editor has looked at the picture of the dresser and has sent me a pained message through a mutual friend, for I have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with the man of letters.

He says the Rainbow Maker and I must NOT hang our cups to face each other because this is unlucky. To maintain luck in a house, cups should all run across the whole of each row in the same position. I fear we have turned incredulous ears to this kindly advice, for we prefer the artistic to the lucky. Nevertheless, I am grateful for the warning and amused at the funny old "cram."

CHAPTER V

THE RAINBOW MAKER

TOMORROW has come. It does occasionally, even on Dartmoor. In other words, the hour is here when I introduce you to the Rainbow Maker.

The Rainbow Maker possesses several alluring old cottages, rugged and weather-worn like the old moor folk's faces.

Yet, with all their stains and scars, they are warmer than any modern dwelling. It is amazing the difference between the warmth of the old houses and the new. Our new wing is as cold again as the old one. It seems as if the generations of fires, the years of sunshine, permeate the walls with a perpetual warmth.

One of these cottages the Rainbow Maker felt justified in appropriating for a fairy story of her own evolving. Even when houses are your own, the model landlord still considers himself bound by an unwritten point of honour—namely, not to let any house or cottage to "gentry" if the working people need a place.

Cottages here are very scarce and very much

sought after as summer holiday haunts by well-to-do people. It is lamentable to walk ten miles round this parish in any direction during winter and see the dear old houses which are shut up, unaired and uncared for except for two or three months in fine weather. Some are even old manor houses and the thing is a growing evil. The houses suffer, and their gardens suffer. Labour suffers, for the district is crowded for two months in summer while in winter when times are hard and work is scarce, there is no one to employ honest workmen. So before putting her little plan into train, the Rainbow Maker allowed one cottage to stand empty for six months, making it known among the people that it was to let. No one applied, which proved sufficiently satisfactorily that the other cottages were enough for local requirements.

Accordingly, one happy Lady Day, the Rainbow Maker turned the little place into a tiny free holiday home for poor ladies who have to earn their own living in large cities.

It is only a four-roomed cottage, whitewashed and painted inside with Pompeian red. It is as simple and humble as a cottage can be, and as clean and wholesome. Its smallness is its great charm because only three can be taken at a time and it is always possible to arrange that the reign-

ing three shall be either relations or friends. This avoids the fatigue of living with strangers.

There are, thank God, many homes of rest now in England for working gentlewomen but their larger scale renders them less restful. It is a boarding-house kind of life with public rooms and meals.

In our cottage, it is cosy, intimate family life without even the disturbing element of a servant. From this, do not infer that the ladies do their own work on holiday. Quite the contrary. They are not even allowed to make their own beds. Among other problems of civilization, the servant problem, too, is easily solved on Dartmoor. Our servants are a retired bluejacket and his wife who live in another of the cottages and minister to us and the ladies without living in either place or any place but their own little quiet home. Mrs. Bluejacket attends to the ladies while her husband copes with us. Consequently, in neither house do we have to waste beds and food on servants or to endure the noise of their constant presence. They come to do their work and they go when it is done, and the sooner it is done, the sooner they go. Thus, they too, have their own home and furniture and freedom. They choose their own meals and have their friends and relations to stay with them when they wish. It is an arrangement which suits

everyone all round and minimizes the difficulties of service from both standpoints.

Usually, our first batch of ladies arrives in May month. They always come to the same station by the same train—the cosiest of trains for arrival whether in a strange or a familiar place because it gets them to their cot in good time for five-o'clock tea.

How many times, I wonder, have the Rainbow Maker and I awaited them at the corner? It would scarcely be possible to count the different sets of visitors we have received since we settled here.

It happens that the drive from the most convenient station is one of the finest drives on the moor, so they get a fine idea of Dartmoor immediately. Sweetly enough, though people say such rude things of our weather, this is never unkind to the Rainbow Maker's visitors.

I don't remember more than three wet drives, either in or out, in all the years they have been coming.

The poor faces that come round the corner always look the same. They are white and lined, with grayish lips. First, they have tea, always noticing and praising its perfection made with the silken-soft spring water which is such a treat to townsfolk. Then they come out to see the moor which runs to our very gate. There is no need

here to traverse lanes or roads. In three minutes, you are on the open moor itself. There is a little library, chiefly of fiction, in the cottage. Light reading is a great rest for brain workers. And each visitor has a deck chair for her own use so that she can rest her poor back out of doors at a really restful angle and not risk chill from sitting on the grass which is always moist here with dews, even in the hottest weather. And so their holiday begins. Each day we watch their faces getting a little pinker and the deep lines being mysteriously and invisibly ironed out by magic Mother Moor.

Then in due time, their hair gets glossy and their eyes bright and the moor bloom is powdered on above the pink. That is such a beautiful result of washing your face in soft water and living in the sun without a hat. The moor sun does not burn people brown as the sea sun does. The moor colour is carmine, like the richest rouge. On that appears a fine white down like rice powder. It is so obvious that if you dip a finger in water and draw it along the neck or cheek, the powder looks to be washed off—until the line dries, when it reappears. This natural beauty is imitated by art with paint and powder. The rough working men here have this delicate bloom on their carmine to a degree which would drive society beauties distracted with envy.

One of the joys of having the ladies is to paint and powder them. If they don't get on fast enough or are inclined to shelter under hats and sunshades, we ruthlessly plant them in the sun for a certain time each day till they are coloured.

Of course, all this means a certain amount of money annually and we are far from rich. By great care, the Rainbow Maker manages the chief expenses, but the often necessary railway fares are altogether beyond us. And it is for these that she sits in the Dartmoor window weaving rainbows; in other words, making chains and necklaces of Venetian glass beads to sell to rich women in aid of their poorer sisters.

They are exquisite, these necklaces, both in colour and form. They are dainty, graceful, delicate yet as powerful as iron chains, for by their magic, they draw many a weary mortal to the great healing and haven of Dartmoor. They are a faithful reproduction of all the moor tints and many of them have names. Some represent our skies. There is one exquisite thing in pale rose, opal, gold and silver called "Sunset." Its twin, "Dawn," is pearl-white, silver and moonstone-blue with only a faint whisper of pink here and there.

Another gray and gold one is "Cloud and sunshine." And a lovely shimmering thing, fit for

half mourning, in gray and silver, is "The cloud with the silver lining."

Then we come to earth and get "Apple blossom" in silver-pink, deep ruby red and touches of apple green. "Lilac blossom" is delicate mauve, green and gold. "Bracken and heather" is green and purple. "Spring" is the palest silver green and copper. "Night" is cut jet and pale gold. "Ice" is all crystal. The effect of this last one in the sunshine or under electric light upon a dark velvet dress is indescribable.

Apart from the designs of the necklaces and the grouping of colour, the beads themselves are works of art. They are of every size and shape, and every one of glass—real Venetian glass and as lovely as only Venetian glass can be. They are immeasurably more beautiful and delicate than many precious stones, for their colouring is so artistic.

It is a beautiful industry for a beautiful object and—herein lies its pathos—it is almost the last thing that is left to the Rainbow Maker to do. In her day she has done great work, with head and hands. She has been a great walker and has done her many miles all about the moor. But her working and her walking days are over—or limited. She cannot walk without two sticks and then only a few yards. Her hands are equally crippled. Ordinary sewing is very difficult, and knitting

impossible. Public work is altogether beyond her physical strength now. Only a retired and sheltered life is possible for her. But she has ingeniously contrived to share her beautiful retreat with others who need it in order to go on living at all. It is not too much for her to manage her cottage and look after her dear ladies and weave the rainbows which bring them to the moor. If she cannot revel in the long walks on the springy turf of the heights, she can still enjoy them in the person of others. And thus her pain has become a precious factor in the production of both spiritual and material beauty.

Once upon a time I gave to Miss May Doney, one of our poets, a necklace made by the Rainbow Maker out of the loveliest pale blue-green beads with touches of old rose and silvery frosting. I think it was the loveliest she ever made. May responded with this exquisite poem called "My Necklace." It is from that time that my mother has been called the Rainbow Maker.

MY NECKLACE

"Colour of sunset that glows
Mystic in sky and in stream;
Colour of clouds when day goes
Unto night's bosom of dream;
Colour that sings in the rose,
Choric of sweetness supreme,

Fire of the labour of man,
Shaping bright beauty for bread;
Fire of an exquisite plan
Fashioned with rare beads and thread;
Fire of how heaven began
Here, for poor hearts that bled.

Light of the grief that is gain;
Light of how souls must be tried;
Light of brave love, out of pain
Giving by gladness denied;
Light of the weak hours that drain
Strength from an angel beside.

Symbol of weeping made wine;
Symbol of waiting turned Bliss;
Symbols of petals that shine
Out of all gardens of This;
Symbol of sorrows that kiss
Into Communion divine.

Dream of the rainbows the years
Wear as the sign storms shall cease;
Dream of the Treasure of Tears
Hid in the Soul that is Peace,
Passion and Patience that clears
Round my dim loving's increase.

Sheen of the Rose that is Light;
Dazzle of Stars that are Fire;
Shimmer of Dawn after Night
Stealing in pearly attire;
Lustre of Worship washed bright
Under deep prayers of Desire."

Dear Rainbow Maker! I never read that poem without a lump in my throat.

CHAPTER VI

THE FRUITFUL LAND

ROUND the window yesterday came a well-known villager. His cap was drawn far over his forehead, his jacket was buttoned up and both hands were buried deep in his pockets. He looked like a man on his way to the dentist's. I paused to cast a glance of sympathy at his vanishing form, then, a few seconds later, was surprised at the sound of nailed boots upon the cobbled entrance.

I got up and went to see what was the matter. He was standing in the doorway with an expression that was almost unnerving. He asked for the Rainbow Maker, who is, at the moment, absent. I broke this to him and asked if it were anything I could do.

Then the portentous truth was revealed. He had come to apply for our farm.

As the Rainbow Maker and I are joint owners thereof, and as it was also necessary that I should report fully to her on the matter, the man and I discussed it eloquently and at length.

Farming is always an irresistible subject of con-

versation, and the working of our own land doubly so. I confess that I did most of the talking and he did the listening. Mournfully, I confided to him the things we could not permit and most detested in a tenant. Pleadingly, I revealed those things which we most desired. It was a joy to find that his views on both sides coincided precisely with ours. After a detailed discussion, during which I was unable to find one point of difference between us, I suggested that his wife should call on me. The farmer's wife is quite as important as the farmer. More than in any other household, intense, even exaggerated, cleanliness is necessary for the sake of the dairy. Next to that is the manner in which she rears her children. No landlord ought to object to children. Rather, we ought to welcome them. Nevertheless, there are children and children. Some, you would not choose to live near for many years. Kate was, I knew, above suspicion, in fact was a model upon both points. Her small daughter has been a prize baby in her infant days and is now a replica of Alice in Wonderland before the age when Alice went down the rabbit hole. The small son is the younger and he appears to squander his short sunny days in repeated laughter.

Ambrose promised that his wife should come in the evening and then he returned to a more general

statement as to his future. Summed up, it is this.

By dint of some years of hard work, he has saved enough capital to start life as a farmer—his great ambition. He has not yet actually worked on a farm, but, in this place, that is no disadvantage, for farming is in their very blood and bones. No matter what other trade they or circumstances may choose for them, fundamentally they are tillers of the soil. In emergencies such as harvest seasons or sudden sickness in animals, some man or other will leave his rightful work and suddenly stand forth, an accomplished farmer. The very postman will tell you, off hand, the advantages of a Lady Day farm over a Michaelmas. I have chosen the postman as an example, forgetting that one at least of them, after his ten miles round, spends the rest of his day working his small farm. The mason is another farmer, and they all dabble in land or stock according to their means. So, when a man suddenly tires of another *métier* and demands a farm, there is no need for apprehension on the landlord's part.

Some of them, when they have either made or inherited the necessary capital, begin life by mortgaging, under the pathetic delusion that they are thus working their own land. They do not realize that the interest which they pay on the capital is

higher than the rent demanded by a conscientious landlord. Even supposing that rent and interest tallied exactly, there is still no obliging person to pay tithes, various taxes and to do the repairs—these last being a heavy item in farming on account of all the outbuildings.

Ambrose has chosen the wiser course. He has selected a good landlord and will pay nothing but his house rates and taxes and his rent. He wants to sow his gold in the fruitful earth and make a double crop of it. As he knows, the Dartmoor farm possesses exceptional advantages. More than one great man, on hearing me discourse lovingly upon the subject, has begged me to write a book or a treatise or an article comparing our methods with those of other parts. Though much flattered by these requests, I have always respectfully declined to comply with them for the simple reason that I know nothing of farming in other parts. I know our ways here and that is all. Of those and the moor and the people I can write to any extent required, but I must leave comparisons to my betters.

One advantage here is our soil. It is light and easy to work. You don't require the horse power necessary to the heavy clay countries, nor, in abnormally wet seasons, is there danger of crop-rotting owing to the water lying in the land.

Another advantage is our copious water supply. There are springs everywhere both for cattle and for irrigation, and the atmosphere, apart from the rainfall, is moister than in many other parts. The hotter the weather, the heavier is our nightly dew fall. In the dog days, they cannot begin hay saving before ten o'clock in the morning because it takes some hours for the surface dew to dry. For the same reason, they reckon to finish the turf cutting and drying by Midsummer's Day. After that, as the sun gets hotter the dews get heavier.

Of course, this delicious attribute makes for a most luxurious vegetation. Parched lowlanders sometimes wander up here from pasture lands that are burnt the colour of a gravel pit and tell us, with emphasis, that we are living in a farmer's paradise. They occasionally express a dubious hope that we appreciate our blessings. But on that point, no one need be uneasy. The farmers here are the most contented race it is possible to meet. They never have misfortunes on a large scale and they are wise enough to appreciate their blessings.

With a soil so light, showery weather during harvest matters much less than it does in places where the corn or clover hay is lying, cut, on heavy land.

Another blessing which we get lavishly on Dart-

moor is sunshine. There is no shade to be had and every ray of light tells. Further, as in all mountain country, with enormous stretches of untilled and roadless land, there is no dust, not even impalpable dust between us and the sun. The direct action of the sun upon material objects is demonstrated, sometimes too practically, upon feminine wearing apparel. After ruining many new and expensive dresses simply by having all the colour searched out of them in a fortnight or so, we learnt wisdom and now retire, about April, into white garments of varying thicknesses. Anything else is really impossibly expensive. The best quality of Admiralty serge, which is supposed to stand anything, turns a weird purple in ten days or so. Coloured linens, even casement cloth warranted to boil, are heartrending to behold before their first washing day. It is the same with ribbons, however expensive, and I have even been warned by a jeweller never to wear my turquoises out of doors in this sun, which would steal all their lovely colour. But, combined with the dew, it can easily be understood what an enormous advantage this radiant light and heat is to the farmer.

The main advantage, however, of Dartmoor farming is not so much the soil and the climate as the free gifts rendered by the benevolent moor herself. Each old freehold has free grazing rights

for sheep, bullocks, ponies and pigs. It would probably be impossible to calculate what this puts into the farmer's pocket during the course of each year. He need not keep his fields for pasture land but can till a larger proportion of them than the ordinary farmer can. Further, he gets all his bedding, merely for the labour of cutting, in the form of bracken. This saves all his straw, which may be used or sold for thatching or else cut up into chaff for the young bullocks in winter. His firing in the form of "fags" he gets, in common with the cottagers, and he can also take gravel and stone for repairing walls and gateways. He can cut furze for firing too if he chooses, and he always takes this for the foundation of every rick, which saves faggot wood. If he is short of reed, he can cut rushes in the bogs for rick thatching.

Thus it will be seen that Ambrose will begin his farmer's life with many advantages. We talked it all over, not because we don't both of us know it all by heart, but simply for the sheer joy of counting up our blessings.

Kate came last evening and we had another glorious tell: farm life from the woman's standpoint. Her first question, significantly enough, was as to the water for her precious butter. She was immediately reassured on the point, for our hamlet is singularly rich in various unfailing springs.

I know nothing about butter making with a churn, but to make butter as we do here from scalded cream by beating it with the hand, very cold and very pure water is necessary. It must not contain even the most harmless of "bits," such as small flies or atoms of vegetation. Neither must it get warm by running too far in the open under the sun. A deep ice-cold granite well yields the best butter water, and this we have besides the sparkling open-air stream full of rain water and oxygen and sunshine.

The people here loathe closed-in and piped water. They call it "dead." From that subject, we glided to household arrangements and the contents of each dear old room. After that, the subject of kitchen ranges was raised. Each housewife likes a small range to stand in the great chimney, leaving room for a hearth fire beside it where she can bake in a camp kettle among the turves if she's a mind to do that rather than use the oven, and where she can boil the huge crocks of potatoes for the pigs.

It is nice to go through every tiny detail with the brave cheery housewife, and still nicer if one is able to do little things for her greater comfort in working. A present that I sometimes give here to a working woman is an up-to-date oil stove. Be it remembered that we have no gas and no

electric light, so there is no means of boiling a kettle or heating an iron or warming milk for the baby except by lighting up a fire, always a somewhat slow and laborious, not to say expensive process where coal is used. A powerful oil stove with a top that will take a kettle or an iron or a saucepan, besides its own "radiator" top for heating a room, is a positive treasure to any housewife. We ourselves have used nothing else for cooking, either here or in the ladies' little cottage. Never even a kettle is boiled over a fire.

The promise of this little gift was received by Kate with delight.

She is evidently longing to be in her own farm, and I can picture what her dairy will be like: a show place every inch of it. When she lived at home with her father, ladies were always coming, she told me proudly, to see her dairy.

How brave it is to begin this work again, now that she has two small children to add to her responsibilities!

The children or the dairy, either alone, would be almost one woman's work. Yet she has as well all the house cleaning, the weekly washing, fires, sewing, cooking, and all the woman's section of the farm work such as poultry, calf feeding, and much varied cooking for the animals.

Yet she will do it all, singlehanded. Some few

years ago, when her marriage was announced, the man-who-made-the-window beautifully defined her: "Her'll make Ambrose a proper helpmate." No queen could desire a higher compliment.

After she had gone, I wandered out through the dry fragrant fields lying so silent in the sunset hush. They have acquired a new interest and value since yesterday.

It's wonderful, extraordinary, mysterious, this aliveness of the land. It is going to support four lives and produce, probably, many others. I am speaking now only of human lives, apart from the many forms of animal life which will depend on it.

One is brought face to face with the motherhood of the moor again, for, after all, our fields are only the moor walled off and cultivated. It is the same earth and climate.

And even the great virgin stretches of unreclaimed moor are indescribably fruitful with their water, their pasture, their bracken, and their furze. Even the wildest stretches of Dartmoor represent firing, bedding, food, drink, roofing, and the walls of habitations for man and beast.

Yet the omniscient journalist will tear across one of the main moor roads in a motor car and describe Dartmoor as "a *barren* waste!"

CHAPTER VII

THE GREAT ANGEL

THE great angel, "Brother Death," has stolen past the window.

He came, unheard and unseen, as daffodil dawn was blossoming in the eastern sky.

Ah, why need he have come for another ten years at least? He came for Mr. Coombe, and no one on earth can take the old man's place in my life and my heart. He was part of my daily life. We met many times a day. Every morning in spring and summer, while I was dressing, I looked out to see him go up with the milk for the calves. That began the day, and from then till dusk he was passing to and fro in his leisurely, happy way, with absolute contentment on his beautiful old face. I hope they won't alter one line of it in heaven.

He has been ill for some time but there was every reason why he should get well again. He was so healthy and the illness was not a dangerous one.

Several weeks ago I had a premonition that I

should never see him again, but I refused to believe it. I was justified in telling myself it was a silly fancy. How could the lamb know?

It was on a Sunday afternoon and he was then ill in bed. I went up after lunch and looked in over the gate of his pet, most sunny and sheltered field where he always kept his special ewes with their lambs. Several couples were scattered about but one lamb was looking through the gate, bleating. Its "dame" tried to console it but in vain. Evidently, she could not make out what was wrong with it. Nor could I.

I have never before seen a lamb behave in such a manner. It stood against the gate, looking out, bleating piteously, its sensitive little nose working with agitation. Suddenly, it dawned on me that it was calling to its shepherd, gentle old Mr. Coombe. I watched it through a thickening mist of tears. Every year, the first lamb of the season was our greatest excitement. Early and late, I plied him with questions as to how many more days, and as soon as it was announced I went with him to see it. There is a quaint old saying that if the first lamb is a ram, the farmer will rule his household for the year, but if a ewe, his wife is ruler. Often I have teased him about the thing.

As I watched this lamb's strange behaviour, it all came back to me, the happy years, the peaceful

years, living heart to heart with Mother Moor. Then at last, the little creature turned to look up at me. I fear I shall never forget its expression. I wish I could. It was the saddest mite I ever saw. If it could have spoken it could not have said more plainly, "He is dying. He will never come to us again. Please carry me to him to let me say Goodbye."

There was something utterly mysterious and entirely certain about it. Suddenly, for the first time, I *knew*—and the knowledge was overwhelming. I broke down so utterly that I could not check the tears at all. I was forced to flee up over the moor lest anyone should see me, and it was over an hour before I could stop crying. Then I bathed my face in the brook and slunk home for an unaccustomed glass of wine to steady me, for I felt utterly broken down.

Each day since, he has been sinking, but I would not believe it.

And now the great angel has fetched him away.

I could have borne it better if it had not been in the spring, in the very heart of the lambing season when all the daffodils are opening. Those things are so knit in with memories of him. Somehow, I do not think that any death is so pathetic as a farmer's. Every animal and every field and every

season seems to cry out for him. How we shall miss him at the hayricks where he was always what they call the "architect." And in harvest time, when he alone could make the wonderful sheaves of corn, seven to each sheaf, builded so securely and gracefully. No young man in the parish can build the piles of sheaves as he did. He told me so more than once. It is a lost art.

And then, the Christmas Eves when he has brought the ashen faggot, the yule log, cut and bound by his own hands, laying it near the door with a smile and "Father Christmas have come for 'ee again."

Well, one must bear it somehow. We know it is best for him.

I love to think of his serene spirit as searching for the Good Shepherd's wandering sheep upon the plains of time, or reaping the harvest of his simple, kindly life on the eternal hills of heaven.

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CHAPTER VIII

MR. BLUEJACKET

If one dear, humble, powerful friend is taken, another, thank God, is left. I dare not even think of the time when Mr. Bluejacket and I must be twain. He has just passed the window in his serene unhurried way, carrying a can of water and an empty bucket. Being morning, he is in working rig—the flapping wide-bottomed naval trousers, a short navy-blue woollen jacket, no collar or tie, a peaked cap and a clean white apron. He is a middle-aged man with silver threads in his fine fair hair and little flaxen moustache; he has a smart, neat, little, short nose, the softest and kindest of blue eyes and small, well-made ears. I am more sensitive about ears than I am about any other feature. He is only a common bluejacket, nothing more and nothing less, and when I begin to paint his picture in feeble words, I remember mournfully the old farmer's over-true jest and I wonder if any book is big enough to contain Mr. Bluejacket.

I wonder if there is a finer type of man in all

the nations of the world than the rank and file of the British Navy which passes on into the coastguard service? The coastguardsman is, of course, the picked, first-class, perfect, common bluejacket. He does his first ten years at sea, and if his character is sufficiently stainless, he is then promoted to guard the shores of England. This has been the career of our Mr. Bluejacket. From nearly every ship, his discharge has been, I believe, "Exemplary," until that particular encomium was done away with. His life is represented by two wonderful charters, fourteen years to each. The first gives his various ships and his characters while on them. The second charter deals with his career as a coastguard until his full time was served and he was duly pensioned by his grateful country.

Then, for some years, his ambition was a cottage in the real country where he could end his days far from even a suggestion of urban life. Thus, deserving it, Mr. Bluejacket has got his heart's desire. Dartmoor is the real country with a vengeance, and it is his own beloved native land of Devon. One of the Rainbow Maker's cottages is now his home. Only one slight shadow falls occasionally upon Mr. Bluejacket's sunny soul. It is the dread of not being able to find another Dartmoor cottage if the fell day should come when he is no longer able to work and we should

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need his cottage for other servants. I cheer him, in these dark moments, by assurances that if I am alive, somehow he shall have his cottage even if I am mad enough to build one for him. And so the shadow passes.

It is very difficult to say which of Mr. Bluejacket's characteristics are the most precious. At any rate, it is difficult to put them in order of merit. The first thing that strikes one about him is his great gentleness and his intense serenity. These two attributes are so melted together as to be one. He is gentle in heart, mind and movement. Instinctively, he loves all beautiful things and all young things. He has had nine children, of whom seven are living and all doing well in life. Well, to write of a man who has had and has helped to rear and has entirely supported nine children requires a volume in itself.

His gentleness of soul reveals itself in this love of the beautiful, the young and the helpless, and also in countless little ways which show the utter cleanness of his heart and mind. I cannot imagine his ever having used a coarse expression, or ever having done a mean or dishonourable thing. You can leave letters and private papers all day under his nose and he doesn't take the very faintest interest in them. He has posted many letters for me in his time, but I do not believe he could tell me the

name or rank of one correspondent. He is utterly above all such smallnesses and all gossip.

His gentleness of movement is such that it is, at times, unnerving. Often he appears at my elbow when I do not know he is in the house. He walks beautifully and is, I should think, a perfect dancer. One friend of ours used to say, "I do love that man when he takes off his boots and *walks*." He changes his boots, of course, when he arrives in here on duty, and wears noiseless felt slippers which do not spoil his movements. For a large section of his life he has been accustomed to go barefooted, which probably accounts for his grace of movement. He hates shoes and boots in all forms. Also he hates shirt fronts and collars. He never wears collars till the afternoon and not then unless he is coming to serve tea, but every night, for dinner, he duly appears in a spotless collar and neat little blue tie, and I often think how it must bore him, after being accustomed all his life to the naval flannel shirt with its simple band of blue across the throat.

He has a passion for navy blue. Everything he possesses has to be navy, even socks and caps. Also, he insists on adhering to the wide naval trousers.

I can identify him when he passes the window without turning my head. I never knew till he

came to live here what is meant by that banal phrase, "a measured tread." His is a measured tread. Every step is the same length. Even when he runs, which he does if he thinks he is keeping you waiting—he calls it "going at the double"—his steps are always the same length.

His cleanliness is intense. He is clean through and through, in body and soul. There is a natural fineness and delicacy of mind common, thank heaven, to his class and county. For instance, when he takes the Rainbow Maker out in her chair to visit people, he plants her at her friend's door and then retires to a distant spot and turns his back lest he should hear the conversation. It is so quietly and modestly done that you don't know he has gone until you suddenly look round to find him. At the epochs when I am taking surveyors round the farm and, for some reason, desire Mr. Bluejacket to go with us, he never opens his lips once the whole time about anything. He walks about ten yards in the rear, so as not to hear the conversation, yet he is always up to time to open gates. If he meets me unexpectedly during his off duty hours when he is smoking his short naval clay, the pipe immediately disappears into his pocket. Even if I intrude into his own garden while he is smoking, the clay vanishes at once. Sometimes I look at him and draw unflattering

comparisons between him and men of my own class who puff smoke unconcernedly into my face and hair. How I do loathe taking down and shaking out my hair at night to smell whiffs of stale tobacco! Hair is the quickest thing there is to catch odours, and its natural smell is delicious—just like heather. That is one joy of having left London for ever. Never, never, never shall I shake puffs of smelling city fog out of my hair again!

Mr. Bluejacket is also one of the very truthfullest creatures I ever knew. This is due partly to his own fineness of character and partly to the incomparable training of the Navy.

Often I make him spin me yarns about his past life, and one that I love best is the account of a fearsome ceremony which takes place, I gather, once a year aboard every ship, when every member of the ship's company assembles to have his character read aloud to the captain and crew. Mr. Bluejacket describes the ordeal in a manner that gives me little iced spiders up and down my spine. He calls it the " muster by the open list." He says you are superlatively spick and span that day, and you march out as your name is called and stand on a certain spot on the deck, with your toes to a chalked line. You are very bolt upright and you have especially to lift your head and look

the captain straight in the face. Thus, you hear the truth unflinchingly. It seems that when your character is a model, no one says one word to you. You are passed over in absolute silence. When you have disgraced yourself, the captain waxes eloquent and there is a pretty how-d'you-do.

It's magnificent training—not the faintest notice being taken of good behaviour because it is simply a matter of course. And I love that regulation about holding up your head and looking at your captain. This applies, too, to times when you are hauled up before him privately for misconduct. You make a specially elaborate toilet when you are in disgrace and you look him squarely in the face all the time he is slating you. Mr. Bluejacket has never lost the trick of holding up his head and looking you squarely in the eye, especially if you are coldly demanding why he hasn't done something you told him to do.

He tells one funny anecdote about a certain bluejacket who was in trouble with his skipper and was remanded to think over his misdeeds for a week. As he dismissed him, the captain said, "And next time you come before me, see that you have had your hair cut. It's too long." Apparently, when a skipper is hard up for insults he descends to personal ones. Now it so happened that the poor bluejacket had lost all his hair

from a shock and was compelled to wear a wig, so he left the skipper's presence, saying nothing.

The following week, naturally he appeared with his hair the same length, and when the other more important business was concluded, the captain said, "I told you to get your hair cut before today. Why haven't you done it?"

The bluejacket smartly whipped off his wig, revealing an absolutely hairless scalp and said, "I'm sorry, sir, I can't get it cut no shorter than that."

The captain, for a moment, was petrified with amazement and then, wisely, burst out laughing at the joke against himself.

The stories about the different captains and their little cranks are the funniest. There was one skipper who had a notched stick with which he used to measure the men who wore what Mr. Bluejacket fearsomely describes as a "torpedo beard." This captain would call a man up to him and poke the stick under his chin to see if the end of the beard came below the notch. If it did, the man had to be clipped at once.

Another captain made the entire crew buy patent leather shoes with blue laces for Sundays and inspection days. Unlike any of the other Government services, no outfit is provided in the Navy. Each man has to buy his own. The only

things he gets free are his cap ribbons. So patent leather shoes, just for the fad of one captain, were a heavy addition to the men's kit. It seems a pity that such annoying and expensive cranks are not controlled by the Admiralty.

Yet another captain had a pleasing way of exercising his lifeboat and crew. He did not like make-believe. It had to be realistic or there was no zest in it. He knew the name of every man on board and in the dinner-hour he would stand on the bridge, look down on such men as were rashly in eyeshot, call one by name and say "Here, ——, overboard with you." The selected man then had to dive over the ship's side at once and swim for his life. The captain would order the pipe, "Man overboard!" throw him a life-belt and have out the lifeboat in full rig. The crew would usually be dining at the time. During the orgy of lowering the cutter and rescuing the man, the compassionate bosun's mate would say, "Men with messmates aboard the cutter, take their dinners to the galley to be kept warm."

This farce would take place every day at the same time throughout a whole voyage. No allowance was ever made to the selected bluejacket for spoilt suits. He had to replace them, in due course, out of his pay.

Our Mr. Bluejacket describes the agility with

which the crew evaded the eye of this particular captain. They would, if everything else failed, fall into single file between him and the funnels. But nothing saved them. If he could not find a man handy, he would send for one by name from the innermost recesses of the ship.

I asked Mr. Bluejacket why some enterprising seaman did not cut the skipper's throat, but Mr. Bluejacket almost thought this would amount to mutiny. He was trundled overboard himself one day in the China Sea.

To the untrained feminine mind, such conduct appears contemptible, ill-bred, arbitrary and tyrannical. It is yet another instance of the evils of any form of autocratic government. It also strikes an irreverent woman as a pity that the conduct of the young officers should frequently be inferior to that of the men.

Mr. Bluejacket can tell stories of them that make one blush for one's class. There is a funny story told of a man who was taken up for insubordination. When the officer demanded the nature of the charge against him, the reply was, "Well, sir, he goes ashore when he likes and comes aboard when he likes and gets drunk when he likes and in short behaves just as if he were an officer."

Once, Mr. Bluejacket and I were poring over my

admiral uncle's portrait, naming his various medals. There was one we could not define and at last I suggested gleefully that perhaps it was the good-conduct medal. Mr. Bluejacket fled hurriedly, making curious muffled noises, and I followed, to find him laughing himself to pieces in the kitchen.

I asked severely what was the matter, and it seemed it was the idea of an officer with a good-conduct medal.

Mr. Bluejacket will tell you about his scrapes but not about his achievements. It was not till he had been here some time that I discovered he possesses three medals, one the Egyptian, another the Khedive's star and a third for—oh, think of it!—twenty-eight years' faithful service and good conduct. Think of all that that little coin represents! The temptations resisted, the duty done, the dull, plodding, mechanical work, the times of danger, the risking of life itself, the saving of life and limb and property. Once at least, Mr. Bluejacket went over the pier after a drowning man, saved him and brought him into the coastguard station and worked at him two hours to restore his life. Another time, when on duty alone at night he saw the first outbreak of fire in a lonely farm where all the inhabitants were in bed, and he saved the house and the people. He has been under fire many times and has got a fearful scar in his

right forearm where he was shot through at the siege of Alexandria. An example of his innate modesty relates to this scar.

On his other arm he has an elaborate scene tattooed. On one occasion, when an interested visitor was here I said, "Show your arm."

Immediately, Mr. Bluejacket pulled up his sleeve and exhibited his tattoo. He was genuinely surprised and confused when I explained that it was his scar we wished to see. That would never have entered his modest head.

There are moments when I wonder, terrified, if I shall corrupt Mr. Bluejacket? The Rainbow Maker says I make a fool of him. She regards him from the sternly practical standpoint of how much work can be got out of him in a week. I fear that his work, to me, is a secondary consideration. He would be worth his wages to me simply to exist. Unless his week's work is adequately done, the Rainbow Maker, on the contrary, is blind to all his other charms. I confess that Mr. Bluejacket is not what you would describe as in love with work. He is too reposeful. And his methods, I own, are leisurely. They say all service men are alike in this respect. And this man is also a Devonian.

But I do feel and I think I am right to feel that it is an honour to be served by such a man. I

melt with gratitude when I see him cheerfully polishing my boots and meekly waiting on me at table.

I love and am honoured to be served by the hands that have fired many a shot at England's enemies, that have saved more than one life, that have, so to speak, carried their own life as carelessly as a pipe of baccy. It is extraordinary to me and I am accustomed to psychologically analyse my fellow creatures, but it really is extraordinary what a powerful personality this man has. For anyone so gentle, so modest, so silent, so unassuming, it is almost inexplicable the sense of latent *strength* that his presence manages to convey. I have never before met it to the same degree in any man and I cannot classify it.

One only finds out his attainments by slow degrees. The first time I watched him splitting logs of firewood I marvelled at his accuracy. He had never done it before, he told me, yet he brought the axe down smack from high over his head, slick through the middle of the log at one blow. I have often watched our moor experts split logs and they will sometimes make three shots at it.

I watched and watched until the solution suddenly occurred to me.

I asked, "Can you shoot?"

He replied in his quiet way, "Yes, Miss," and

went on splitting. He was not to be pumped on that subject.

I told his wife at tea-time how he was doing his work, remarking that I had never seen such deadly precision. She laughed and said: "But he's a dead shot, Miss. He wore the crossed guns on his sleeve for twelve months straight off on one ship and got extra pay because he made more bulls-eyes than any man on the ship."

The mystery was explained. When he came at dinner-time I asked why he hadn't told me he was a crack shot, and he smiled uneasily and didn't know. But think of the added joy that our fires are when Mr. Bluejacket has been making bulls-eyes with every log. Such men are such a delicious mixture. For instance, he will shoot an enemy through the heart at some impossible range and his chief passion is wild flowers. Every Sunday morning of his life he picks a bunch of wild flowers, from the very first week that there are any to pick. He arranges them himself and often gives them to me for the dining-room table. He cannot bear the dining-room without flowers, and if I have carelessly not replenished the jug, he always complains how bare the table looks. He keeps that jug going with flowers up to the very last bloom, and his own cottage is never without a bunch of flowers. He has also a passion for

animals, though it is nothing to their affection for him. All animals love him—horses, dogs, cats, birds, and even a crazy young cockerel lost his heart to him last spring, following him everywhere, even into his cottage.

I have seen a robin follow him about the lane and perch close to his hand when he is working.

How clever he is with those same hands! Are all bluejackets as clever? He can sew. Hand him a pair of stockings and he will darn them. Bow him out with a boot and a packet of buttons and he will bring it back with every button firmly stitched on. He writes a beautiful fine delicate hand and can do the big lettering on the canvas covers of vans. His thimble is a fearsome sight, a sort of leather gauntlet with a half thimble set into a hole in the centre of the palm. This is what he used for sail making. He can paint and whitewash, cook, wait at table, clean, polish, scrub—oh, how he scrubs! What the boards are like since he took them over!

He is a genius at vegetable growing. We have never had such vegetables.

Yesterday, by the way, I wondered if any man can be as good as Mr. Bluejacket looks when he is planting young cabbages. I wanted him for something so dashed up into his garden. He didn't hear me and was smoking his short pipe and care-

fully measuring out the rows with a string and two sticks. He was wearing his perpetual pinny, without which he never does a stroke of work. The garden is entirely sheltered from the cold winds and gets every ray of sunshine. It was such a little enclosure of peace that I hesitated to call him. He did look so good and so absorbed and so happy, and the cabbages were quite as happy. His little terrier dog was grouting wildly in an empty bed and his mad little kitten, that literally adores him, was rushing up and down the washing poles, mad with the joy of living. It was good to watch him and to think that all the dangers of his life are over.

Mr. Bluejacket's accurate eye, of course, makes him intensely neat in all his work, whether gardening, wood-cutting or what.

His parcels are a sight. My friends, after years of my parcel-making, don't know themselves now. There are thirty-three different kinds of knots in the Navy, all of which naturally Mr. Bluejacket can tie. He tries to teach me some of the least complicated but I always ignominiously end by a "granny." He can't tie granny knots, so there, at least, I score over him—if it is a score.

His one recreation is to go to bed. He always goes to bed in his off time—namely, every Sunday afternoon from midday dinner till late evening

tea. His wife says he always has, and that all bluejackets have a natural propensity for bed. They get time off at sea, but, of course, on board ship on long voyages there is nothing to do. They can't go ashore. So they go to bed and sleep sweetly. Mrs. Bluejacket says she has never had trouble of any kind with him since their marriage. No going to public-houses or picture palaces or being out late at night. Fancy the restfulness of a husband who spends his free time in bed! It accounts, I think, somewhat for the serenity of his nervous temperament, this childlike trick of daytime sleep.

Mr. Bluejacket is kind about my book-writing propensities. He is kind in general and in particular. He takes a fatherly interest in my troubles and successes, and has given me an unqualified permission to put him into any book at any time and in any form.

I said once: "Don't you care what I say of you?" He said, "No, Miss, not a bit." I said, "Supposing I say nothing but rude things?"

He only laughed. He doesn't even want to see what I write about him. Obviously he has more important things to consider—such as seed-sowing, flower-picking and whitewashing. Moreover, a man with his history can well afford to ignore anything which a mere woman may say of him.

CHAPTER IX

DARTMOOR WEATHER

FOREIGNERS say rude things about our weather here. I always angrily defend it. As a story against myself I will quote a recent letter written by me to the Rainbow Maker, who was and is safe in a distant dry town. She thought it funny. It is a temperate description of what we go through here at certain seasons.

MY VERY DEAR RAINBOW MAKER,

I am chronicling the weather today. By tomorrow, I hope and pray I may have forgotten it.

It is coming down this chimney and there is a large clean patch of water on your bedroom ceiling.

It is coming through the landing window.

It is coming through the hall window and was running down the hall floor in a stream towards the outer door until I rigged up the rag-and-bucket game.

It is coming down the dining-room chimney in streams. It would have been under the fender

across the room if I hadn't put a bucket to catch it. It is coming through the dining-room wall and has run under my writing-table mat.

It is coming down the drawing-room wall in streams and across the floor to one paw of the tiger skin. A tributary stream has diverged along the ceiling from this main stream and the tributary has run down the sloping ceiling of the back window and come out at the woodwork down the muslin curtain, which is dark coffee colour. (This is the most ingenious thing they have done yet.) Thence it is all over the white window seat.

It is coming down the drawing-room fireplace in streams. The hearthrug was put to dry in our wood room, but it wept such pools of scarlet tears and was so staining the cement floor that it has been banished to one of the linhays to have its cry out in peace. It is coming through the ceiling on the landing of the old wing in streams which necessitated my placing a bucket there last night. The bucket is half full of black water this morning. This ceiling will, I think, soon come down bodily.

It is coming through the spare room ceiling, down the wall and running along the floor under the door out on the landing. This ceiling will also come down, I think.

The only place it is not coming in is under the dining-room door leading into the garden, but this

is obviously an oversight on their part. Probably they will soon remember.

The climate is as warm as late spring. The matting sticks to your shoes as you walk and all the looking-glasses are clouded.

In all the years I have lived on the moor I have never seen anything like it. It is like sheets of spray from huge waves, and the wind is such that it is driving it clean through solid walls.

The Tweed Dog is sitting it out by the window as usual. I send her home every ten minutes or so to no purpose. She is no longer Tweed, but is black and spiked.

Monday evening. At three o'clock this afternoon, there was a short lull while they were making more weather. During the pause, I scuttled to the village. On the way I met an angel disguised as Tom Willcocks in sacking, with his cloak skewered together by a gimlet.

He told me the thatcher is here! I fell on his sack-swathed neck and wept tears of gratitude, assisted by Jack Hannaford in the rear, who revived me, not with smelling-salts, but by promises of nitches of reed. When I recovered, I went to the village, returned home, and wrote a Dirge to the thatcher saying if he does not come to-morrow, I shall go up on the roof and do it myself.

Instead of taking THE chance of his life and seeing

the show, he has had no more spirit than to send a reply saying he will be here as soon as it is light, bringing reed with him on the way.

So now it will rain for forty days and forty nights without ceasing. As we know by experience, nothing brings the floods that a thatcher brings. I can swim enough to save myself. Mr. Bluejacket will save Mrs. B. The Tweed Dog can, of course, swim. And those are all I care about.

Among other games they played this morning was one with my alarm clock. The weather has apparently got on its nerves. For three nights it has refused to go for more than five minutes at a time, unless it is continuously shaken. Now, I have an unchristian hatred of a clock that I have to sit up all night with, shaking. So as I must be on time tomorrow, I decided to take the clock to bits this morning. I did so and doctored it with a knitting needle and the champagne nippers. It still would only go for five minutes at a time without shaking. I went on for nearly an hour, then my temper exploded suddenly into ten thousand pieces. I fetched down a box, fetched wadding, fetched brown paper, fetched string, fetched a luggage label, wrote to the jeweller, packed it up—and from that moment (noon) till now (8.15 p.m.) that clock has gone hard without stopping. When Mr. Blue-

jacket came for dinner, he didn't know the latest jest they had been having with me, and he could not think what was ticking. He never, of course, suspected the guileless brown paper parcel, but went nosing around the room, couldn't account for it, and finally obviously decided that he was less sober than he thought.

Nevertheless it is going to London tomorrow, even if it is still ticking. A clock that has to be wrapped up in a parcel every night at bedtime is not much more use to me than one which I have to sit up to call in the morning.

Bed Time. The glass is struggling down a little lower. There is hardly time now to get the life belts out as the new consignment of weather has duly arrived.

Once more, my love,

Yours apprehensively,

BEATRICE.

CHAPTER X

THE TWEED DOG AGAIN

The Tweed Dog and I have been lunching out. It is Sunday. We watched all the good people, in their best garments, trot past the window to the eleven o'clock service. Then, in very far from our best things, we made a bolt for it.

I had no hat, and over my willing left shoulder was slung the crowded satchel. The Tweed Dog carried nothing but her idle self.

Once across the road and through the moor gate, we were safe. There was the happy certainty that we were going to walk miles and be out hours and that we should meet no human being all the way and all the while. Up the narrow track, between the bogs we went, beside the singing stream. Then mounted to a gray old tor and thence down across a broad dimple on the moor's face, along narrow winding grass tracks round the side of another tor, still downwards to a deep sheltered dip that I call Grassy Hollow. Here runs a stream spanned by a granite wall, facing due south. Sheer on the north rises a steep, and between

THE TWEED DOG AT THE WINDOW

that and the wall, and the downward slope of the land, it is the most sheltered spot for many miles around.

Providentially the wind was due north so there was not even air enough to stir a hair. The heat and light were dazzling. I cuddled down with my back against the wall, so close to the stream that I could dip my fingers into it. The Tweed Dog flopped down, with a groan of delight, several yards off and went to sleep. I never sleep or read or knit or write under these conditions. Nor do I ever move. I can and do sit by the hour, absolutely immobile, entirely without external occupation, watching the miracles of the moor, glowing to the tips of my toes and fingers with the inexpressible joy of living. Now and then the Tweed Dog wakes up, raises her head, takes a long long look at me, vibrates her tail, drops her head and closes her eyes with an exaggerated sigh of contentment. Occasionally the look is too much for her, and she rises slowly, creeps, tremulous with apology, to my side and approaches her muzzle very softly to my face for a kiss. She has an idea that I don't like kissing, and as she cannot live without it, she is intensely deprecating. As a matter of fact, no one could ever tire of kissing her. She is so clean, so soft, so well bred. She smells of clean dog and new-mown hay—always. She never, never, never

licks. I can put my cheek against her nose and she holds it there perfectly still.

Sundays are always the great swaling days here. There was no wind anywhere this morning, and right ahead of me rolled the great pale amethyst reaches of the moor, flecked everywhere with dainty puffs of pearl-white smoke. There was no large fire today. They had lighted a score of little fires. Bellever stood in the centre of the vista like the great high altar of the moor from whose vast sanctuary a band of acolytes had run away leaving their smoking thuribles behind them. All around Bellever, in a circle, were the white threads of smoke ascending skywards in the still air.

Always my thoughts in Grassy Hollow are such as cannot be translated into language. Today, as I watched the incensing of the heart of the moor, language was hushed by the great silence of eternity.

In due time the thuribles burnt themselves out and then we lunched.

My meal consisted of a hard-boiled egg, chicken and ham paste sandwiches, cheese and tomato sandwiches, an apple and some sugared almonds. The Tweed Dog had the bones of a shoulder of mutton and some large crusts. I drink strong hot coffee out of a vacuum flask. She drinks cold pure water from the stream. I always take bones, rather than meat, for her lunch, because it takes her

longer to eat them and this gives me a chance to finish my meal in peace. It is fearsome, the way that dog eats bones. She champs them up as I should crunch up a cream cracker biscuit. I cannot think why she does not scratch her throat with the jagged splinters or get appendicitis and die in agonies. The sharpness of her teeth and the grip of her jaws! What a horrid thing a dog-bite must be. Sometimes, as we sit alone together, miles from any other human being, I reflect that, with one snap, the Tweed Dog could tear my throat out. I wonder, often, if it would be possible to make her bite me. Now and then I prise her jaws open and put a finger in between her teeth. She holds it in perfect silence and without moving as long as I leave it there, gazing at me out of her clear brown eyes. She will not close her teeth tight enough to leave the least mark on my skin. She knows exactly how much pressure to use.

I carry her lunch wrapped up in many folds of newspaper so that it cannot grease the inside of my satchel, and when she has finished I roll the newspaper up very tight and drown it in the stream.

Now, I have had tea and she is passing the window at intervals with herds of cattle from the various fields, while I write of her.

Since her appearance in my last book, she has

been the object of much fulsome admiration. I am begged to give further news of her, some of which will show her in a new light.

She is not always a good dog, I rejoice to say. At times she is uncommonly human.

I always boast of her perfect manners and breeding, but last spring she belied my words in the funniest way. A visitor came for the day only, just to see a glimpse of the moor. He yearned to make the Tweed Dog's acquaintance, so after lunch I took him out, saying with calm assurance : " We shall find her on the bank or near it."

She was not on the bank or near it. She was nowhere in sight. I wandered round the place till we reached the orchard where the farm labourer was cutting hay from a rick. Queer little short yelps struck my amazed ears. I called, but there was no reply. I called again, and out from behind the rick flashed the Tweed Dog, mad with excitement. At the sight of me, she executed a brief war dance, then dashed at the rick again. The gruesome truth broke on me only by degrees. It was too staggering to grasp at once. The Tweed Dog, the model dog, the essence of all that is well bred, this dog was ratting like any vulgar terrier.

Hurriedly I removed the visitor, who was a prey to unseemly laughter. He went back to London

and spread the story and I received more than one gibing letter about my well-behaved dog.

On one occasion she went with me to make a call at a house which has two entrances. I went in one way and she waited for me at the door. When my business was concluded, the good dame asked me to go into the other wing of the house to see a new window, and I finally left by the other door, forgetting all about the Tweed Dog. Half an hour later, on my way home, I was surprised to see the said woman and her small son bareheaded in the road, apparently watching for me. She hailed me with much agitation and said: "Oh, please, Miss, would you mind fetching your dog? She won't believe you have gone and we are afraid to go in." Horrified, I went to look and there was the Tweed One standing, perfectly serene, in the centre of the kitchen, waiting. Of course, she would not think of even growling, still less of biting, but there was an air of firmness about her which made them afraid to enter. Her attitude of mind was perfectly obvious. She had not seen me leave the house and she was not going till I did.

Another time, however, her behaviour was savage. I was crossing the farmyard with her and, inside the gate, I met a man selling oleograph pictures. He had a bundle of them and, just as we met, he shifted the bundle to the other hand, throwing up

his arm as he did so. It looked as if he had raised his hand to strike me. The Tweed Dog flew at him, her coat on end, all her teeth showing, and snarling with fury. I shouted at her, frenziedly, only just in time. She stopped short in her spring and then went round and round the wretched man, growling and barking and worrying as if she were possessed. He stood rooted, too terrified to move a muscle. He might have been suddenly petrified. I continued to call and plead, but she was too furious to take any notice and at last her master ran out and quieted her. I should pity anyone who did lay a finger on me in her presence. She has one curious trick which I want someone to explain. When she disapproves of a dog and fights it, she never says one word. Usually, she is most amiable with all strange dogs. But, now and then, one appears that she feels she must kill on the spot. She does not bark or growl. She simply makes one spring in perfect silence and proceeds to slay it. It is frightfully disconcerting for me, not to mention for the dog, because she gives no one time to do anything. Once, in a narrow lane, she gave one leap at a perfectly harmless dog which was passing and was on it before we knew what had happened. Of course, the dog yells and I yell and she drops it with apologies, but the suddenness and silence of her methods make one go hot all over. I have

never known a dog who did not bark or growl before attacking, and I don't understand why she should not do so.

Another thing she will not stand is too much abuse during working hours. No farmer much cares what he says to a dog in moments of excitement when a herd of bullocks are scattering wildly in all directions, and no dog much cares for his ravings. The Tweed Dog is habitually regardless of a tone that would make the Giant Blunderbore quail, but, now and then, her master goes too far.

She gave him a lesson some months ago. That, too, was a Sunday by the way. I noticed she did not appear after eleven o'clock, and by the early afternoon I went to look for her. I met her master, who said she had been away since morning and had not even returned for dinner. All the afternoon I watched palpitating, but there was no sign of her. She did not come home at tea-time and all the cattle had to be got home without her help. After milking I went again to inquire, and my distress was so evident that the farmer confessed with a twinkle. He explained that he had abused her too violently in the morning, when they were turning out the calves, and she had simply turned her back on him and walked off.

"I must be more polite seemingly," he concluded

with a twinkle. "Her's a female. One must mind that. If I bain't mannerly enough, her goes off and bides away all day and leaves me to do the work. Her'll come home to supper right enough when the work's done."

Of course, I didn't believe him. It sounded too far fetched. He assured me it had happened once before and she was only teaching him manners. I continued, however, to wander round and round the farmstead, distraught, till moonrise. Then I suddenly heard a rush along the road and the Tweed Dog literally flung herself into my arms. Her master was quite right. I hugged her with paroxysms of joy and asked where she had been all day and what she had had for dinner. But she would not tell. I went with her to the farm where she was received with much merriment, given her supper and put to bed.

Sometimes, however, she will deliberately shirk her work without the shadow of an excuse. I have seen her, the moment she is let out in the morning, begin running races with a beautiful golden collie who lives near by. They evidently make an assignation overnight, for he is here early waiting for her and they tear off together like lunatics, leaving the farmer swearing helplessly in a medley of skipping cattle. After two days of such performances, she is chained up in the stable to

meditate on her sins until she becomes a better dog. I wrote an account of this episode to a publisher friend. He replied, "I really begin to fear that the Tweed Dog is no lady. Racing the roads with gay dogs is not done in the best families." I gave her the message and she replied, "A lady can do anything."

The publisher answered, "The Tweed Dog's notion of what a lady can do is very elastic, but it must be very comfortable."

Occasionally she writes letters. But she can only write Looking-Glass writing and, in any case, it always makes her paw ache, so she usually sends messages through me to her correspondents in the manner I have just cited. However, one or two very honoured people do sometimes get letters from her, the foremost among these being the Rainbow Maker whom the Tweed Dog loves. I append one of her last letters. Upon receiving it, the Rainbow Maker wrote severely to me: "If you don't feed that poor dog when my back is turned, I shall have to come home again and see to it." I delivered this message and the Tweed Dog replied, dictating her letter to me—

MY DEAR MADAM,

I am glad to hear you have written to HER about my food. I know now how to bring

you home again. I shall telegraph: "No bones. Please return at once. TWEED DOG."

After all, as I said before, what is a little suet skin to a dog like me?

Your faithful servant,

TWEED DOG.

Once upon a time, the Tweed Dog did a perfectly wicked thing. She wrote a postcard to a friend who admired the account of her in *The Heart of the Moor*. He lives in London. They say that the G.P.O. prides itself on being able to read the most cryptic modes of address and boasts that no letter is ever delayed one delivery. So the Tweed Dog, as I say, wrote the postcard entirely in Looking-Glass writing, address and all, and sent it to the publisher to post in London for her. He did so, and it took three whole days to reach the recipient. Obviously, no one could make it out. In any case, history does not tell us what the postman on the beat did: whether he carried round a small handglass with him or whether he made a note of the name and address before starting.

That postcard is, of course, kept as a curiosity, together with a lock of the Tweed Dog's hair and a scrap of my old tweed dress to show the match. The publisher wrote sorrowfully, "It is really

heartless to give those poor overworked Civil Servants any fresh strain. They begin work at 10 in the morning and leave off at 4 in the afternoon and they only get two hours for lunch out of such a day as that. I am ashamed of you for adding to their burdens." I should have loved to see those gentlemen peering into a mirror with the Tweed One's postcard.

Just at present, she is in the wildest spirits, for she has a lovely present for the Rainbow Maker. It pains the Tweed Dog that the Rainbow sits so much in the window and cannot get out for walks. Sometimes, she will not leave her, she feels it so. If I am going out and call her, she remains sitting on the bank staring in at the Rainbow Maker pleadingly. Then she gets up and dances, and sings, and runs along the road a little way and comes back, and does it again and cannot understand why the Rainbow Maker won't come.

And, one day recently, when the Tweed One and I were sitting out in the sun, suddenly the Great Idea came. We both went mad with delight. I ordered the thing, in fact, went and chose it myself and brought it safely home. When it really was a secured fact, the Tweed Dog dictated to me the following letter, which I also addressed for her because we really did want the Rainbow Maker to get it at once.

My dear Madam,

I trust you will excuse a dictated letter. She and I are sitting in the lily bed with that clicking thing with a bicycle bell on it, and She says she will take down what I wish to say as my paw is still a little weak where I ricked it and this letter would be too long for its strength. I am a poor scholar at the best of times.

My present for Mothering Sunday for you is a beautiful little carrying chair.

It is much nicer, She tells me, than the one where you are staying. It is much shorter in the seat and smaller all over. It is only three inches lower in the seat than an ordinary chair and this can be obviated with cushions.

It has bamboo poles instead of those long clumsy handles. These poles slip into rings at the side and fasten with little bolts. So when the chair isn't wanted for carrying purposes, it makes a very comfortable chair for the house. She has spared no pains or expense about it and I am very much pleased with the wisdom She has shown in selecting it. You may wonder how I was able to pay for it, but I am a Dog of Means, though I never mention it because all the ineligible curs in the village would be after me if it were known.

The moment the chair arrived, I came to inspect it myself. It will rest your poor back in the house,

which is what we have been wanting for you, as you say the easy chairs are too low to get down to. And you will now be able to get out into the sun whenever you wish and many times a day if you wish without the least pain or exertion. Also you can be taken up and down stairs any time you wish. This will enable you to save your powers for exercise on the level. You will be able to get up the moor again and into the fields, because no kind of ground matters for this chair as it does for the wheel chair. Also there will be no fear of ditches or motors.

It is easier for those who carry it than the wheel chair because the weight is divided between two people instead of being all done by one. I think it will make *the* difference to your life.

I shall, of course, personally superintend your outings, especially the first.

There is now a lovely flock of sheep in Great Close Field and, as you know, there is a smooth stretch of turf outside that field with the stream and the tiny flowers you are so fond of in the turf. It is sheltered there from the north, so I hope we shall soon be up there with you.

I am very fond of lambs. But don't mention the word " bullocks " to me, please.

There will be no more saving up and making a huge effort to get out and then finding a cold wind

and having to go back. You can go from your desk or your bedroom right up the moor without a twinge.

SHE thought it was a pity to wait till your birthday, so decided my present should be for Mothering Sunday because SHE has another present for your birthday—one which I think you already know.

I am so tired of trying to take you out that I thought of this that first sunny day as SHE and I sat under the tree by the stream.

SHE says you will have hysterics when you get this letter. I don't know what hysterics are. I hope they are as nice as bones.

Believe me, dearest Madam,

Your faithful friend and servant,

(*Signed*) TWEED DOG.

CHAPTER XI

SEEDS

The weather has changed since yesterday. The wind has gone "back" as we say on Dartmoor. They never stoop to name the quarter of the wind. "Wind's up, I see" means a north wind. "Wind's going up again" means it is changing to north. "Wind's back" is south.

Our stop-gap thatcher, who does not belong to this village, had a pretty phrase. He always said "Wind's back in the rain country, I see."

That meant south. "Rain country" is a sweet idea.

The Tweed Dog called me at seven o'clock this morning, just as Mr. Bluejacket was sauntering in to get breakfast. She calls me sharp at seven on weekdays and sharp at eight on Sundays. I am allowed an extra hour once a week. She arrives under my window, which, by the way, is exactly above this window and is its twin, so to speak, and she begins by shaking her ears with a loud rattle. Then she sings a little scale that I have taught her and waits. If that produces no result,

she gives short, smothered barks. She is not allowed to bark, ever, because of disturbing the Rainbow Maker who is not always fit for early rising. So, when the Tweed Dog does disobey and bark, she does it in a whisper. She knows that produces me sooner than anything because I am obliged to get up and quell her. At this time of year, or, in other words, from March to December, I breakfast at half-past seven. So the Tweed Dog allows me half an hour for my toilette, which is ample. I can do it in twenty-five minutes, even in winter.

I often tell her she is a blest creature to tumble out of bed every morning, clothed to her claws, clean, and tidy.

Fancy never having to wash, or dress, or do your hair, or clean your teeth, or shave!

I went for my walk so early after breakfast that the Tweed Dog could not accompany me. It was just cattle time. I met her coming up from Great Meadow where she had been depositing the cows, but all the calves and steers were still to be done, so I went alone.

How delicious the first spring rain is! The fragrance was intoxicating. All the thrushes and blackbirds were trilling rapturously, thinking of the delicious worms there would be by early dinner-time. I passed through a field of lambs which I always

think is *the* field in the parish at this season. It is very extensive and runs in one unbroken and gradual steep from the sky to a wooded hollow with a brook at the bottom. The moor, crowned by a near tor, shelters it from the east—and all over the soft green pasture were dotted ewes and lambs in every attitude of action and repose. Some were asleep, some were gambolling, some were grazing. One pair of lambs squatted in the middle of the field, exactly in the same position. They sat cheek to cheek, with their legs folded precisely in the same way, their ears at the same angle. One might have been a reflection of the other. Three lambs allowed me to stroke their tiny curls. Lambs' wool is a wonderful thing. Their coats are exactly like the ordinary small close astrakhan fur, except that they are white instead of black and are much rougher to the touch. The ewes' coats or fleeces are in long loose curls, not nearly so fascinating as the tiny tight ringlets of their babies.

Now, I am back writing in the window, intoxicated with the perfume of my hyacinths, lulled by the soft hissing of the wood fire. The Tweed Dog is sitting on the bank, sprinkled with raindrops. She is bolt upright but fast asleep and swaying slowly to and fro in her dreams. A steady distant bumping noise announces that Mr. Bluejacket

is "making bulls-eyes." He usually spends wet mornings over firewood. How he spends wet afternoons it were better not to inquire. The Rainbow Maker declares that he passes them in gentle slumber, when he might be polishing furniture or cleaning silver. It is a matter I do not probe.

Even though the rain prevents me from writing out of doors as usual, I look on it with delight, for it is the very thing for all my wonderful little flower seeds that are tucked snugly away in the clean brown mould of beds and gray old walls.

I sowed them ten days ago and we have had hot sun and dry wind by day and white frosts by night ever since . . . a delicious combination of good things for healthy-souled seeds. Now, this rain is the very thing at the very epoch.

I have sown and planted golden alyssum in the gray granite walls among the shell-pink and rose-red tulips, the white and purple crocuses and the terra-cotta wallflowers. "Golden dust" is the pretty common name here for alyssum and it is brilliant enough to make you gasp if you turn a corner suddenly on it in May month against a cloudless sky.

In the lily bed, among the white madonnas and the orange Peruvian lilies, I have sown blue bee larkspur and rose-coloured hollyhocks. All along the front wall, varied sweet peas and clumps of

shell-pink hollyhocks, besides plenty of varicoloured stocks and the scarlet fire of dwarf and climbing nasturtiums.

Among the stones of wall and rockeries, alternately with the gold dust, I have put lilac candytuft. And in every possible and impossible place else, giant sunflowers, the great common single ones with the dark centres and flame-shaped and coloured petals.

While I was sowing them, the absolute and literal miracle of germination rushed into my mind with a fresh flood of light.

If we did not already know it, it would be incredible—as incredible as the miracle of human generation.

Suppose, for instance, a person had been reared in a cave or a coal mine and had never seen vegetation in any form. Suppose I were to show that person three small objects in the palm of my hand and say—

"I am going to put this seed into the ground—this gray, fluted, oval-pointed seed which, as you see, is only half an inch long. From that seed will rise a green plant with a stem almost as thick as my wrist. This plant will grow till it is taller than I am and at the top of it will come a flower the size of a plate; a flower with a dark brown centre and long petals of bright yellow round it, like the

rays of light round a star. From this other seed, the small, very thin, perfectly flat one, half the size of the first, will grow a plant equally tall or taller. Instead of one flower at the top, it will have rows of blossoms half-way down its stalk. They may be yellow, pink, white, scarlet, deep maroon, or rose colour. This third seed, the tiniest of all, only the size of a pin's head, and as black and brightly polished as jet, will produce a graceful bush of a plant with delicate mauve-pink stalks and groups of flowers with long graceful spurs to them."

If the supposed person had any spirit, he would promptly tell me that he didn't believe one word of it because it was not possible.

There are very few things of our daily life which we should believe unless we were always seeing them. And even seeing them we don't realize them.

We should not even believe in the inventions of the mere human mind unless we were confronted with them. I once visited a certain office of the Remington Typewriter Company about a necessary repair to my machine. When business was finished, the manager asked if I would like to see their latest model. It could do sums, he informed me. At first, I was amused. I thought he was jesting. When he assured me it was sober fact

and that the latest machine would do long money addition and subtraction sums, I politely but quite firmly told him I did not believe him because the thing was not possible. How could any machine do the work of the human brain? He bowed me to a chair, got the machine, put in his paper and started. First he put down a long column of figures for addition. As he typed the last line of the sum, the machine threw out the answer in red ink. It was correct, and there was no pause whatever. He then prepared a complicated subtraction sum and the same thing happened. As he typed the last line of figures, the answer appeared in red.

I left that office in a state of mind that can hardly be described and I have got that paper now. The miracle is worked by means of a small square box of wonderful tiny cog-wheels which represent as closely as possible the mechanism of the human brain. The superiority of the machine over the human accountant is that the machine is twice as quick and cannot make mistakes. Provided only that the correct figures are typed, and this requires no knowledge whatever of arithmetic, the result can never be incorrect.

That manager thought nothing of it because he was using it every day. Its effect on me was, as I say, indescribable. I *knew* the thing was

impossible—just as my hypothetical person reared in the coal mine would know that my flower seeds are impossible.

There is one article of faith above all others which the seeds make easy. This is the resurrection and immortality of the human body. If a mere inanimate seed, a thing belonging to a plane below the lowest form of organic life, can appear out of the earth in so exquisite a form, how utterly *infra dig.* it would be to think that our beautiful and wonderful bodies should have lesser powers, especially as these same bodies contain so many of earth's material constituents.

I love to think how " Brother Death," the great gardener, will, one day, plant us in the earth that we may blossom, in due time, out into glorious, many-coloured, radiant and perfumed flowers for adorning the eternal courts of heaven.

CHAPTER XII

SACK COSTUMES

The rain continues and the men are beginning to pass by in sacks. This is always a Dartmoor weather guide.

If I did not dress to please myself and my fellow women, I too should wear sacking, here, in bad weather. Nothing hurts it. It is very warm and it washes to perfection. Many times I have bitterly asked some man of my acquaintance whether he would notice it if I came down to breakfast one morning dressed in a sack with a string round my waist. Usually he stammers out that he isn't sure. If he is a married man he thinks possibly he might notice something unusual. Unmarried men never know even what colour your eyes are or whether you have any hair or not. Even artists haven't the vaguest idea what colour you are dressed in if you ask them the next day. There is a popular idea that women dress to please men. To a woman who knows anything of men, this is merely an amusing fallacy. I have proved it up to the hilt. When I have

met a more than usually intelligent man, I write to him next day, asking, "What costume was I wearing yesterday?" Being conscientious, he does his best. It gives you fits. He does not even know the difference between a coat and a cloak. One summer, for the delectation of a certain friend, I wore a linen dress of the most glorious shade of china blue that I have ever seen in any shop. I grew weary of waiting for appreciation so at last I said severely, "Isn't it very kind of me to wear this lovely blue for your benefit?" He became very unnerved and faltered out, "Oh, is it blue? I wasn't sure if you would call it green."

When I had sufficiently recovered, I staggered to my room, put on a white dress with the broadest, longest tie of the richest, most flaming scarlet that any dye vat could produce, went downstairs again and said, "I will give you three guesses as to what colour this tie is."

He was positively annoyed. He said, "I am not a fool. Anyone can see it is red."

Red for scarlet! Well, it was quite good for an unmarried man. So on the whole I felt I had scored over him. But I never again wasted the subtleties of blue upon him. I stuck to white and flame colour. And the moral of it all is that I take no trouble whatever with my toilette when

I am seeing only men. I now dress to please myself and my fellow women, on whom not even a button is wasted. Mind, I don't blame men. It is the result of their deficient education. We should be the same if we were not taught at school to paint, and perpetually told to notice shades of colour. Such things form part of a girl's education. They don't of a boy's. There is the difference. The married man learns a little from his wife.

In one way, it is a mercy for them. If they miss beauty they also miss ugliness. Many a time I have wished myself quit of a trained and beauty-loving eye. And considering the horrors of feminine fashions it is lucky that men do not notice them as much as women think. If there were no women in the world, one could dress happily and cheaply in sacks as the men of Dartmoor do.

As I remarked in my last book, the men here dress exceptionally well. Usually "best" clothes are a nightmare. Here, even the plainest man looks at least smart if not handsome when he is got up for church. They don't put on best things for market—only a sort of second best. Church is the place to see them at their best. On weekdays they descend to the other extreme. I am not surprised that people, foreigners, who come out should often say, "What awful-looking men you

have here." I used to think the same myself. I still think it only that I now know the apparent ruffian happens to be a kind and gentle friend. It is in bad weather that they look their worst. They begin with a groundwork of all their oldest garments over which they have varied styles of sacks according to the degrees of weather they are facing. Any sort of head-covering does for bad weather. Usually, it is a kind of Tyrolean felt soaked out of all shape and colour which turns dejectedly downwards instead of upwards, even to the tips of their noses. This gives them a hangdog look, at once. Shaving here is not the general custom except on Sunday mornings, and scarcely any man here wears a beard, so by the end of the week he has got a stubble which gives him the air of a convict. I often wonder why a really handsome man should look a villain simply if he doesn't shave daily? And why does a really intellectual man look mentally deficient when his hair wants cutting?

Then, for some occult reason, the men always carry an enormous hedge stake about with them in bad weather. It is always as high as their shoulders. Between the old clothes, the weird drapery of sacks, the unshaved face, the battered hat and the hedge stake, I admit that our men do need explaining. Till I got used to them I

would myself dodge through a gate and down a hedge till they had passed.

There are three degrees of the sack costumes: positive, comparative and superlative, according to the intensity of the weather.

The first is a cape over the shoulders. This may be assumed for quite bearable rain. When, however, the downpour increases, another sack is added to the front, beginning at the waist like an apron.

The last degree of hopelessness is a sack skirt that goes right round them and is girded about the waist with rope.

One man here has a skirt that fills me with admiration. His fellow men regard him with envy. It began life as a gigantic sack of a size rarely used in farming. It is double, too, which adds to its utility. It reaches from his armpits to his boot tops, and is the precise cut of the recent feminine hobble skirt, which I beg to state I never once wore. It has no fold or pleat and he puts it on and wraps it round himself so ingeniously that you see no join anywhere. At one corner of the bottom—like the woman's skirt—it has an opening to allow him to walk. Below the sack appear gaiters with brass buttons and the ordinary inch-thick farm boots. Above it is the usual shoulder cape of sacking.

Sometimes, the sacks have black lettering on them, which adds a bizarre touch to the costume.

A farmer can go out into his fields, fetch in his various herds of cattle and at the end of his journeyings remove the sacks in two minutes and be perfectly dry underneath.

This afternoon, only the positive or shoulder-cape degree of sack has appeared, from which I conclude that the Tweed Dog and I may possibly get a walk after tea—unless she is fetching cattle home early which sometimes happens on wet evenings, in which case I shall again have to go alone.

CHAPTER XIII

CUT GLASS AND CRYSTAL

This morning, during breakfast, the sun appeared and, a few seconds later, the queer old room was flecked with fragments of a rainbow. Some of its brilliant pieces fell on the white tablecloth. Others soared to the ceiling, and some clung tenaciously to the walls.

I turned towards the window for the explanation of this beautiful visitation, and one large ray of the vermilion tint flashed into my eyes, blotting out definite objects and transforming my outlook into a red-gold glory without form or image.

How strange it is that I should have had that cut glass scent-bottle all these months and that the sun should never yet have touched it!

It stands on my black oak writing-table in the old stone window, a tall, tapering, massive flask of cut glass with a big, pointed stopper—a splendid piece of English workmanship. Opposite to it, as a contrast rather than as a pair, lives my big ball of crystal.

Sweetly enough, both these objects were gifts

from two friends who came to me through my last book, *The Heart of the Moor*.

They each wrote to me as entire strangers, from different parts of England, and in each case our friendship has become one of the lovely things of life.

Each generously demanded to know what I would like for my birthday and these two were the things I chose.

I love glass in every form, and these two pieces of glass are treasures of which I never tire.

Since this morning especially, the big scent-bottle has become a greater joy than ever. I know now that whenever the sun shines I have only to lift it into the light to be gemmed at once with rainbows.

The crystal, on the other hand, does not depend on sunshine for its peculiar beauty. It gives out no colours or rays of light whatsoever. Its beauty is all self-contained and within.

It is the size of an orange and is, I am told, the real thing used by crystal-gazers. I did not want it for this purpose, but only as a paper weight of glass. It is so polished and so heavy, a fascinating thing to roll about in your hands.

Not till to-day, though, have I realized the allegory of my two cherished pieces of glass.

You see?

Before we have loved, we are the smooth, self-contained crystal which gives out no rays of light.

After we have loved, the pain of loving cuts deep into our hearts, making numberless beautiful facets from which bright-hued rainbows are reflected even upon unresponsive objects within the radius of our lives.

All through life when we see these rainbows we can say with certainty, " Somewhere near me is a heart that loves and that has been deep-cut by loving."

CHAPTER XIV

"IMPENDING APOLOGIES"

Oh yes, Mr. *Punch* visits Dartmoor faithfully every week. Funnily enough, our leisurely ways infect even him and he never arrives before Saturdays. *Punch* is the main thing in life without which I will not even try to exist. If I were very poor, I would go short of three pennyworth of food weekly rather than miss *Punch*.

My passion is shared by the men here. Each number progresses steadily round the village and is also seen by several at each house.

The other day I met Tom Willcocks, the wight referred to in my weather letter to the Rainbow Maker who wore his sack cape fastened by a gimlet. We stopped as usual for a tell. I never pass that man if I can help it. His manners, his accent and, above all, his laugh are worth going a long way to hear. He laughs exactly like a child being suddenly tickled. And the poorest jests call forth this sudden laughter.

He is one of our moorland geniuses though he doesn't know it. He is immensely strong, pre-

posterously sweet tempered, fair and blue eyed. His speciality is stonework . . . making the "dry walls" of fields. A "wet" wall is a mason's wall made with plaster. A "dry" wall is the real Dartmoor wall builded of great stones interspersed by earth and moss and ferns and flowers and stonecrop and the countless other lovely things that grow in Devon walls. Willcocks makes these walls to perfection. Great strength is needed for the work because he has to begin by getting out the granite, first, on the moor, breaking it and carting it to the scene of action.

His sledge hammer is a thing which I can just lift with both hands, and I am strong. Another of his accomplishments is thatching. He never will undertake to thatch a new roof, but he mends old ones, which is even more vital, and he also thatches all the ricks in autumn. Besides these two arts, he can do anything and everything on a farm.

His honesty literally makes one weep. I once embarked upon a speculative enterprise of which he disapproved from the first. I secured his services because no man in the parish would have been so good for what I wanted. He worked for a fortnight at what he considered a vain endeavour and then he struck. It was useless to point out that if I liked to spend money in such a way at

least it was harmless, for it employed honest labour, and other fine ladies would squander a bigger sum at Bridge in one night. This did not appeal to him. He simply said that if I chose to throw money away he was not going to abet my folly and he declined to work for one more day until I consented to obtain expert advice. And he didn't. No persuasion or threat would induce him to continue another hour. He simply said, "Tiddn't honest, Miss. I bain't going to take your money any longer." Thus forsaken, I procured the desired opinion and the work was successfully concluded.

Once when I was congratulating this man upon his gentleness, he became immensely grave and replied: "Well, what I always say is this: manners costeth nothing."

The other day when I met him in the road, I happened to have *Punch* with me. I saw Willcocks eyeing the cover and fidgeting and at last he said, "Beg pardon, Miss, but I suppose yu never have no such thing as that to let me look at, have 'ee?"

I was electrified. I said, "Do you mean *Punch?* Why, of course. You shall have him every week if you like. But do you really understand it?"

They are never hurt when I ask these insulting questions.

He answered meekly, "Yes, fey. A week agone, Miss, I saw yu and thought I would make so bold as to ask yu then, but when yu come'd near, my courage wouldn't come to it after all, in a manner of speaking. So, next day, when I went to town, then, I asked Mrs. Easterbrooke, the newsagent, if she'd a got a *Punch* left, and her hadn't, so I was forced to bide content without 'en."

I stood still while the full truth soaked slowly into my amazed brain.

"Do you mean to tell me that you, Tom, went to a shop to buy *Punch* all for your very own self?"

"Yaas, Miss."

"But do you know he costs threepence?"

"Yes, fey. But I'd give threepence for he any week."

That man earns eighteen shillings a week at the outside, often only half in bad weather. Threepence is a large sum to him. Yet he was willing to squander it rather than miss *Punch*.

And he is only what would be described as a "labourer." His taste is versatile too, for, once, when he was recovering from an illness, he was allowed to choose a book from the ladies' library, and, rather than all the good light reading, he selected *The Future of South Africa* and did not even know he had done anything remarkable.

I don't expect anyone to believe these stories.

I shouldn't myself if I met them in a book. Nevertheless, they are true and perhaps will explain better than larger and graver things what I mean when I call our men a high type.

It was this encounter which made me remember the "impending apologies" or the "things one would rather have left unsaid" which happen to me here. I have four very pet ones.

This is the first. When we left London for good, I brought with me some latent microbe which developed about a week after our arrival and, one night, I was so ill that the doctor, who lives six miles off, had to be procured before morning.

There is only one way to get the doctor at night and that is for a man to ride out on horseback and fetch him.

When they decided to send, I bethought me of the man in this hamlet who rides the lightest weight. He was by no means so great a friend of mine as some of the others, but I was thinking of the horse, which had already been to market.

They routed him out at 10.30. He was asleep in bed and had a bad cold at the time. The man who roused him suggested that someone else should go, but Bill was quite firm. If I had asked him to, he would. And he did. The doctor arrived at two o'clock and I was in bed for three

weeks and then convalescent indoors, so it was many weeks before I was able personally to thank Bill for his kindness in fetching help.

The first time I caught him, I proffered my warm thanks and was struck speechless by his reply.

"Oh, don't mention it, Miss. I should be *only too pleased to do it again, any time.*"

On another occasion I wanted an implement used here in ironing. It is not common to these parts, understand, but the local carpenter makes it. It is a sleeve board—a shaped wooden frame with a little stand on whose padded arm you put your sleeve to iron it. Ironing is one of my manias, but it annoyed me to find that my sleeves always came out with creases. Angrily, I sought explanations from other and more experienced operators, to be told that I needed a sleeve board.

I caught the carpenter and asked if he could make me one. He said yes, he happened to have a nice little bit of oak in stock which would be just the thing. I said, "You are quite sure you know what I mean?"

He replied, reassuringly, "Oh yes, Miss, I have often made they *for other laundresses.*"

Once upon a time, the tax collector called. This orgy I always leave, awestruck, to the Rainbow Maker, in common with other intricate Govern-

ment requirements concerning property. But she is sometimes away at tax time, when I have to interview the man myself.

He was a dear old man with beautiful white curly hair on which he always wiped his pen without leaving a black mark. I never knew how he did it. There was no black even at the roots.

He always addressed me quaintly as "Young lady."

Of course, I lured him into a tell and we discussed a certain manor here whereon the ordinary manor customs have long fallen into disuse. He told me the name of the owner which happened also to be identical with that of a great writer. I was thrilled.

"Is he the writer?" I asked.

"No fey," explained the old man, scornfully. "He don't write books. I tell 'ee, *he's a gentleman.*"

It was too much for me. Jokes against myself always are. I broke into unseemly laughter during which the poor old dear suddenly remembered a rumour he had heard about my book-writing propensities.

He turned purple with misery and though I implored him not to spoil it with apologies, he murmured that "leastways, some gentry do write books now and then, nowadays."

People are always trying to take this house furnished. They wander round lusting to possess it and then, for some inscrutable reason, always go to the farm to make inquiries.

One pair was confronted by our then farmer's wife, a woman not remarkable for good temper. She listened to the question and then replied in a supercilious manner, "They never let. *They'm gentry.*"

Luckily, we happened to make the lady's acquaintance a few days later and she told us of the retort as a joke. It enabled us to apologise profusely and to assure her that no tenant of ours had ever been remotely instructed to say such a thing.

The fifth "impending apology" relates not to my humble self, but to His Majesty King George now gloriously reigning.

Years ago, when the royal pair were Duke and Duchess of Cornwall, they honoured the village with a visit during their tour through the "delectable Duchy." Certain parts of Dartmoor belong to the Duchy of Cornwall and we have one or two natives here with rights out on the "forest."

I respectfully decline to describe the excitement which prevailed. I do not think that one solitary person here had ever seen any member of the royal family.

At the conclusion of their visit the Prince and Princess both signed the visitors' book, and the moment they were safely gone there was a rush to inspect the royal signatures.

One old farmer belonging to the Mr. Coombe generation, who are "no scholars," pored over the book till everyone wondered what was the matter with him, though no one dared to break his trance.

At last he straightened himself up proudly and remarked—

"Thanks be, I see His Royal Highness bain't a much better scholar than what I be myself."

CHAPTER XV

TIGER-R

As I was sitting here this evening, typing, an avalanche crashed up the hall, causing the very china to click upon its shelves. The rushing body turned at right angles sharp through this door and hurled itself upon me. Three minutes later followed a silent and defeated bluejacket.

The avalanche was his kitten, Tiger-r. That is how he pronounces her name and that is how my friends and I always write it.

I have said more than once that Mr. Bluejacket is a Devonian, and in all his travels about the globe never once has his tongue lost the lilt of Devon. One of the prettiest things about the accent is the full value they give to every 'r,' whether at the end of words or in the middle. I practise for hours, but I can't do it. I tell Mr. Bluejacket if I had to pronounce every 'r' throughout the day, I should have to sit up till after midnight because I should never otherwise get through. He never even thinks: "There's an 'r' coming in this word. Look out."

A very learned classical scholar whom I once knew declared that it is the absolutely correct and highest-class English and that no 'r' in any word ought to be silent. They all talk, for instance, about 'water-r,' 'butter-r,' 'Mother-r'—pronounced 'MUther-r'; but Mr. Bluejacket sounds the 'r' even in the word 'hours.' It's much more difficult than the singular form 'hour,' because you have got to get the line clear of the 'r' before the 's' comes along. It's the same with 'flowers.' And the same too with such words as 'burning,' where the 'r' is in the very centre. Since Mr. Bluejacket has been here, I have never once known him ignore an 'r' anywhere. And the rest of the people are the same.

Tiger-r is his kitten. She adores him. She tears about after him wherever he goes, even to the village to post letters. Every day she conducts him to the next farm, where he has to leave a newspaper, and brings him back. She trots along close to his feet with her tail stiff in the air. He never carries her, and no matter how wet or snowy or muddy the road may be, she never flinches.

She is what we describe as a "moorland kitten." She has none of the town cat's soft ways. No cat here has. They don't care one atom for cold water or for rain. Tiger-r goes out in such weather that she looks like a little drowned kit, but she

never heeds. She plays about by the stream, and runs round the edge of the big granite trough when the water is lapping over its sides; she jumps the raging torrent for fun and sometimes dips a back leg in as she alights. If you sprinkle her with water as you water the garden she purrs and thinks it is raining.

She is a common dark English tabby with amber eyes that exactly match our old-gold serge cloth as she sits on the table. Mr. Bluejacket doesn't allow her to sit on tables. He has some obscure idea that it is not pretty manners in a kitten.

She takes no notice whatever of his corrections. She is impervious to all correction. If you smack her, she purrs again and thinks it's a new game. If you throw stones at her, she runs after them and plays with them. This is the result of his training. She is mentally deficient upon one point and she always will be: she is utterly unable to grasp the conception of unkindness.

Her spirits are such that she is almost as mad as I am.

It is moor madness in both cases. The exhilaration of moor life produces in us both such hilarity of disposition that misfortunes roll off us like raindrops off a nasturtium leaf.

Tiger-r apparently lives for the purpose of keeping company with Mr. Bluejacket. She is twice

as sharp as he is and her amber eye is on him when he flatters himself he is alone. He disapproves of her coming here to work with him so he tries to shut her up before he starts out. This evening she preceded him as I have described. He tries to take her home but I usually say she may stay. Then she has pranks with him. As he stands by the stove, she runs at him from across the room, gallops up him without a pause till she reaches his shoulder when she kisses him frantically and tries to knock his head off.

If he is trotting about the place on his hands and knees, polishing floors, she leaps up and rides on his back. He talks to her *sotto voce* in a falsetto key that suggests an amateur ventriloquist. Two evenings ago, she did a very smart thing. He started out as usual at dinner-time, having, as he thought, shut her in. She was not at the door when he arrived here, so he came in, closed it and changed his boots. When he reached the kitchen Tiger-r was gazing impudently at him from the middle of the room. He stared as if she really were the devil. What she had done was this: she had preceded him at a gallop, torn round to this window unseen and climbed in before he reached the door, so as to be here before him.

Cats here are an absolute necessity on account of the rats with which all farms are infested. Tiger-r

is a demon for rats. Cats are really more useful than terriers for them because cats can see in the dark and can get in where dogs can't. Sometimes in the dead of night we are awakened by the sounds of battle overhead. The cats go up into the roofs at dusk and creep along between the thatch and the ceilings in the pitch dark after their prey.

I never know how they have the nerve. It makes me creep to hear them. Rats are frightfully savage things, and once, I am told, there was the case of a cat that was killed by them. Their worst vice is eating baby chickens.

Tiger-r is absolutely fearless of all things, including carts, bullocks and strange dogs. When she goes for walks along the high-road, she cares for nothing that she meets.

Once only, in her short life, have I known her frightened, but that was more a start than real fright.

I was sitting out, one afternoon, waiting for a friend to come and take me walking. Mr. Bluejacket was making bulls-eyes in the linhay opposite. Tiger-r was fast asleep on my knee. We had not been there long when the Tweed Dog mouched up, sat down close to me, put her head in my lap with her nose in Tiger-r's stern and fell into a doze. The situation was saturated with peace.

Tiger-r slumbered on, unconscious of the Tweed

Dog's advent, till my friend appeared in the distance. Seeing her, I shouted lest she should miss me. The Tweed Dog, anxious to assist me but too lazy to lift her head, gathered her full strength together and gave one bark. It was only one, but it numbed my right ear which was nearest to it.

What it must have sounded like to Tiger-r can only be faintly deduced from her behaviour. She did not get up in the ordinary manner and jump off my lap and run away. She simply gave one spring straight from her reclining position, that landed her into the middle of the road. She gave a second spring which carried her into the linhay to Mr. Bluejacket's amazed feet. She then ran up him madly and told him a frightful story about how a bomb had exploded behind her while she was asleep and blown her straight through the air.

Mr. Bluejacket did not fully believe her but he gathered that the Tweed Dog and I had been, in some way, tormenting his kitten, so he appeared in the linhay doorway to demand explanations. When I could speak, which wasn't for a long time, during which my friend stood beside me laughing as wildly as I laughed without knowing why she was laughing, I sobbed out the story to Mr. Bluejacket who was immediately overcome himself.

Tiger-r was furious at our vulgarity and swore she would never again sit on my knee.

She and the Tweed Dog love each other. Tiger-r comes tearing down out of the garden and charges the Tweed Dog who lowers her great head to receive the impact and then rubs her nose very gently down Tiger-r's back, after which Tiger-r reaches up to sprinkle her with kisses. When the Tweed Dog is too idle to lower her head Tiger-r embraces her white fore-legs.

That is yet another sweet trait in the Tweed Dog's character. She is utterly above jealousy. She permits me to love every animal besides herself. Any cat may sit in my lap and she lays her head there with it. Other dogs may sit beside me and she sits opposite so that their heads meet in the centre of my knee.

She knows that she need fear no rival. When two creatures love as the Tweed Dog and I love each other, they can afford to love all the world besides.

It is only a narrow little degree of love which limits itself to one object and desires to exclude the world from its heart. A great love must inevitably overflow upon all creation.

Tiger-r has a pet little white terrier called Toby who belongs to Mr. Bluejacket. The affection between these two animals is preposterous.

They have a delicious sleeping arrangement. Toby curls herself up in the shape that I call "whiting ball" and then Tiger-r ascends, lies down, puts her fore-paws down under Toby's fore-legs and they both sleep all night in this position. When Mr. Bluejacket descends in the mornings, he finds them.

He calls Tiger-r "Toby's blanket."

I never know why a lady dog should be named Toby, but she is.

A few days ago, Toby went for a walk on the moor with Mr. Bluejacket and got into a rabbit hole which was situated in the centre of a swaled clump of gorse. Swaled gorse is soot black and comes off on every object within range. The result was that Toby arrived home literally and absolutely black. She got on a chair, and Tiger-r, after gazing sadly at her, mounted up after her and proceeded to wash her clean. Mr. Bluejacket harshly ordered Toby off the chair so she went to the hearthrug, but the pitying and courageous Tiger-r followed and continued to wash. It was obvious that she was not intending to cease till she once more possessed a white terrier. Then Mrs. Bluejacket intervened, put on a kettle and gave Toby a hot bath. But only think what Toby must have tasted like to Tiger-r.

This morning, Mr. Bluejacket was serenely

cleaning the Dartmoor window in a biting northerly gale. His animals never can leave him, so poor Toby came and sat shivering in the wind, with one trembling paw held up in an attitude of pleading. Obviously, she was saying, "Oh, do be quick and take me home."

Tiger-r is made of sterner stuff, and when Mr. Bluejacket got on the steps she swarmed up the ivy beside him so as to be near.

The Tweed Dog was so sorry for Toby that she went and sat beside her, getting between her and the wind, to which, at this corner, the Tweed Dog herself is inured from long custom.

CHAPTER XVI

MOORLAND TRAGEDIES

I MAINTAIN that things do not happen in other places as they happen here.

One friend suggested that in a little village, sparsely populated even for a village, one notices sudden deaths more vividly than one does in a town. This I grant, but, nevertheless, as I say, the sort of things do not happen elsewhere.

I have given a succession of tragedies in my last book, and it was just these very tragedies which roused the incredulity of publisher and readers alike. This very incredulity is one proof of my point. If such things were common, why should men be incredulous?

The uncanny events are not confined only to one family. They affect all the children of the moor indiscriminately.

Sudden deaths upon the moor or the highway are frequent, deaths with apparently insufficient cause.

When we see the men riding by this window, we often wonder if they will return. More than

once or twice or thrice, we have seen them ride out, vigorous, in the morning and their corpses have come home at evening.

Some little time ago, one of the natives went out at noon. By tea-time, the telegram arrived, summoning his unfortunate wife, who drove out to the lowland town, passing a pool of her husband's blood upon the highway. The horse had slipped and fractured the rider's skull. Three days later, a near relation of his died of shock, and both funerals were on the same day.

Since then, a farmer was returning with his wife from market when the horse stumbled. It did not even fall. He got down to examine it before proceeding, staggered and died on the spot in his wife's arms. His body reached home that market evening, in a hearse.

Another man went out on his rounds as usual in the morning. He was found lying dead beside his cart on a lonely moor road. The police procured a hearse and he was taken back to his wife, who had heard nothing till his body arrived.

Then there are the people found dead in bed at dawn who went to rest in their usual health the previous night.

I can name three offhand which have happened comparatively near together in this village. One man was found dead beside his bedmate. Quite

lately, an old farmer was found lying dead in his shippen beside a cow.

There is at least one house in this parish which is said to be haunted. Various independent witnesses—mere birds of passage through the place—who know nothing of its history or of each other, have made this statement at different times. I must not enlarge upon this, for it would be a grave injury to its owner to do so, especially as the thing is not suspected yet by the natives.

A lady visits us occasionally from several miles away, and whenever she comes I always tell her she brings a fresh uncanny story.

She told us, at one time, of a certain gray lady who haunted the road between her house and the next farm. Our friend suddenly discovered that her servants would not go for the milk in the evening, and on pressing for the reason of this reluctance was informed that a strange woman in a gray cloak, who certainly was not mortal, had taken to infesting the road at dusk.

Our friend, whose nerves are robust, of course ridiculed the thing, and at last got so weary of the annoyance of nervous domestics that she investigated the matter herself. One evening at dusk she went to the haunted spot and was staggered to see a woman in a gray cloak disappearing over an impossibly steep place. She firmly told

THE VIEW FROM STATION ROAD

From a photograph by Chapman & Son, Dawlish

herself it was nerves and an optical delusion and mentioned it to no one. When she went out next morning, she was still more staggered to find a woman's footprints in the snow just at the spot where the ghost disappeared. Our friend then sent for the police and told them the story. Watch was kept and investigations made, and it turned out that the woman in gray was no myth, but a mad woman who had escaped from a distant asylum and had returned to her native place.

To my mind, the solution was less pleasant than the original theory. Personally, I would rather meet a ghost than a lunatic. And when that woman dies, it will certainly be said that her ghost haunts that road indefinitely.

A few months ago, a human skull was found lying, loose, in a tuft of heather not far from here. It was not an antiquarian remain, because bones are never found here in the excavation of the ancient hut circles. There is no lime whatever in the soil of Dartmoor, and vegetation feeds greedily on it, devouring it in quite a few years. Pottery, metal and flint arrow heads are found buried in the ancient encampments, but not bones. One infers, therefore, that the skull in the tuft of heather was a modern skull, but whose it was or how it arrived here, has never been decided.

A short time ago, we were driving up from

Dartmeet. The driver and I walked the hill and I diverged to look at the Coffin Stone, as I always do. It is the large flat stone, half-way down that terrific hill, upon which coffins are rested which come from those parts. The stone is cleft through in the centre and an old legend says that "for years agone," when the coffin of a very wicked man was resting on the stone, a flash of lightning struck it and cleft the boulder in twain. On the great stone there are carved rude crosses and the initials of the dead men who have rested on it.

When I returned to the high-road, the driver asked if I knew that a coffin had halted upon that stone only two months previously.

I did not know, for, unfortunately, the horse-drawn hearse is destroying the beautiful old moor-land custom of hand-carried coffins. Some people still cling to the old way by which a pole is passed through two rings at the head and foot of the coffin, thus enabling it to be carried many miles over any kind of country by simply changing bearers from time to time.

The driver mentioned the name of a man whom I knew well. He had died lately and ordered the old-fashioned funeral. His wishes were obeyed and ninety bearers assembled at the starting-place so that the thing should be efficiently carried through. They paused for the usual rest on the

coffin stone and when they resumed their way it happened that two bearers, carrying at the same shift, were brothers. No one thought anything of it till they reached the graveyard, where a "wise woman" was among the spectators. She scolded the two men roundly for their folly, telling them that if two blood relations carried a coffin together, it was certain death for one of them.

They laughed at her. But, ten days later, the coffin of one of those men was the next to rest on the coffin stone. He died suddenly a week after the funeral.

Are there many places in England where one could go for an afternoon drive, pass such a coffin stone and hear such a story, oneself knowing all the people mentioned and the episodes having happened so recently? I don't, of course, attempt to explain any of these things. I can only narrate them, and I never wonder that Dartmoor has acquired such a sinister and mysterious reputation.

Some miles from here, some years ago, a man committed suicide by shooting himself upon the open moor. Queerly enough, he fell dead exactly at the boundary of two parishes. His shattered head lay in one parish and his body in the other. It resulted in a discussion as to which parish should be responsible for his burial.

In this same place a crime was committed which resulted in the death of five people. It was a lovers' quarrel. The jealous young man suspected his sweetheart of infidelity and took to spying on her at night. One Sunday evening after church he saw her in the dusk with another man. Running for his gun, he shot her dead, only to discover that the man was her brother.

Her wretched father, utterly distraught, went to break the news to his mother, an old woman and very feeble. As he entered the house, he swayed and fell dead. The poor grandmother died of shock within the week. A friend died upon hearing the news, and the murderer himself was, very properly, hanged. So there were four funerals the same day in that moorland parish.

I do not expect anyone to believe this story. I never blame people for disbelieving our wild, far-fetched moorland tragedies.

But they are true, though if one weaves them into a consecutive narrative, one is so cordially cursed for second-rate and impossible melodrama that one hesitates to use the truth.

CHAPTER XVII

LAPSES OF MEMORY

The Rainbow Maker and I sometimes wonder what ails the reminiscent faculty of moorlanders. It cannot be the climate, because we are immune from the baleful influence. It is lucky that we are, by the way, for if we were not, we should all miserably perish.

It is the more inexplicable because it only happens at intervals—this complete blankness of mind in the natives. In between, they can remember things quite as other people do. Another singular attribute of the visitation is that it attacks all at the same time.

I will give a week from my diary to illustrate what I mean. It is a week that I am still ineffectually praying to forget. For one thing, we were without regular servants because it was the week previous to Mr. and Mrs. Bluejacket's arrival. For another, the cold was such that never, not even during the glacial period of the moor, can there have been anything to compare with it. Possibly it was the arctic conditions which froze

the people's memories. For a third trying circumstance, the Rainbow Maker was at that time holding a nightly class for men in the ladies' cottage, which is not used during winter.

You will realize all the work that these things meant. Cold weather in itself almost doubles housework because of the fires and lights required. During that incomparable week, I cleaned eighteen lamps and stoves daily. It is work I enjoy. But there are only twenty-four hours in each day, even if you turn the night hours into day too.

It began with my thickest moor boots which are specially made for snow. Suddenly, to make life harder, they sprang a leak. We debated as to repairs and decided that the farmer's wife should be asked to take them to market where a humane cobbler mends boots " while you wait " for moorlanders, it being one of our few chances to get made watertight. Accordingly, I hastily wrapped up the boots, enclosed a note of directions inside and escorted them to the farm overnight.

The good dame was very propitious and highly sympathetic, promising they should return the next evening, duly mended. They did return next evening, but not duly mended. She had driven them to market and back and only remembered them when she unpacked her cart in her own farmyard upon her return.

What I said about it, I won't shock anyone by recording. But it was nothing to what she said about herself.

Two days later, a woodcutter came for the day. He was Mr. Bluejacket's stop-gap. He arrived on time, at 8 a.m. in the glacial dawn, quite sweet in the temper but, as we subsequently discovered, minus his memory.

All went well till noon. Then I ordered him on his way to dinner to do three things. 1. Call for the letters to post. 2. Remove a barrowful of "rummage" to the moor pit on his outward journey. His road home led past the pit. Of course, we have no dustman here and no place of any kind to put old tins, and broken glass and china. You have no idea what a painfully tidy place Dartmoor is. If you drop the smallest tin or bury even the most innocent shred of china, they both crop up like ghosts and haunt you till you walk with them to a river and drown them. To obviate this difficulty, the men dig deep pits somewhere on the commons, to which we pilgrimage and into which we drop rubbish. When a pit is full it is covered over and another dug. My third injunction was to leave the potato sack at the farm, also *en route*, and call for it on his way back after dinner. He started forth cheerfully from this door with the letters and we thought

no more of him till nearly 3 p.m. Then the bell was rung in a guilty whisper. I went. It was the woodcutter, gibbering with misery. From his breast pocket he produced the letters—unposted. There was nothing for it but to release him temporarily, and he wasted a chunk of time walking to and from the post which he had passed in his dinner-hour. When he had finished his day's work and gone home, I went to see that the linhays were locked up. I found that the rummage was still reposing in its unlawful place, and that he had forgotten also to call back on his way for the potatoes. We went without potatoes. It was simpler than trying to find someone to fetch them.

That same evening I told the female indoor stop-gap to order butter for the next morning. She forgot it. I put out the basket and saucer in the morning and told her to have another try for the evening.

She expressed regret, jumped the basket and departed. They will do this when they are in these moods. You can arrange a row of milk bowls, newspapers, egg baskets, all sorts of things you want them to remember, in a line where they must fall over them to leave the house. And still, they will leap them and not know they have done it.

I decided, then, it was safer to fetch the butter myself. We could not go on living without butter. Slowly but surely, one article of diet after another was being wrested from us. I had been trying for butter for twenty-four hours, which brought us to Saturday evening, and if you want butter on Sundays the rigid Sabbatarians among the farmers' wives don't like it. So I snatched the saucer and fled to the farm through the icy wind.

There was a lull on the Sunday, but the plot thickened heavily on the Monday. We were having to cope with two fresh workmen who were painting and repairing Mr. Bluejacket's cottage.

The man-who-made-the-window arrived first with his cart full of wood. He had been after it to the distant town. What the cold must have been on the highest point of the moor road returning home, I did not like to think. I met him at this gate and greeted him. He stared at me with glassy eyes and made no sign of recognition. I hazarded a sympathetic remark about the cold. Still, he was too frozen to respond. As a man in a nightmare, he led his horse past me to the cottages and, black in the face, unloaded the wood. The pots of paint which he had with him and which ought, of course, to have been unloaded too, he drove silently home.

Next morning, he came to work and forgot them

again. Man No. 2 who arrived a few minutes after him to begin the painting, found no paint. So he squandered his morning and our money walking back to the house of the man-who-made-the-window to fetch the erring paint pots. During his absence, one of our large oil store cans started leaking. As I have previously explained we entirely cook and partially heat by stoves, so, especially in such weather, oil is a serious consideration. That happened to be the day on which the travelling oilman visited us. He was not due till noon, so I begged Man No. 2, when he had secured the paint pots, to return here for the oil can, take it to the village, get it soldered and return with it in time to have it filled. Otherwise, our weekly chance of filling that can would be lost. Nothing more was ever heard of him. The oilman arrived and filled everything feasible, though we were still under our weekly allowance, even the summer allowance.

That had to be abandoned. You can't go on beyond a certain point. Time and strength don't permit. Food was again the next trouble. I was making heroic if futile efforts to keep up the Rainbow Maker's vitality and my own with adequate nourishment, and I desired vegetables. I was informed that the only available thing, besides potatoes, was turnips. For three days, therefore, I had been ordering turnips steadily with

no result. Also, we were getting short of bread. When the morning indoor stop-gap departed home, I begged her to bring us a loaf next day from the village, because the baker only calls here twice a week, and the next day was not his day.

I need perhaps hardly mention that she never thought anything more of it. I hadn't time to go after bread. It's rather a long way. The turnips was a quicker matter, so, as in the butter case, I went myself. The farmeress was shocked at the thought of me carrying turnips, and offered to bring it for me. I explained that if your pedigree is genuine, it really doesn't matter what you do. She was not wholly convinced and reluctantly handed me what I can only describe as The Turnip. I expected a basket or bag full of little ones such as you see in greengrocers' shops. This was nearly the size of a two-pound loaf. I carried it reverently home by the hair of its head, got out the meat chopper and split it cautiously into chunks.

The same day I sent a postcard to the baker to bring sponge cakes and I put out the cream glass for cream next day. I thought the Rainbow Maker and I would have a nice sweet for once. The evening stop-gap jumped the cream glass and departed, and I didn't find it till next morning when the cream was all made into butter.

Then the baker arrived, announcing in dirge-like tones that he had forgotten the sponge cakes.

That is the record of a week. At its end I discussed with the Rainbow Maker the feasibility of setting up a signalman here—a reserve man who should do nothing else but remedy other people's memories. It would take an able-bodied man's full time, and a retired bluejacket who was also a signalman might be able to send wireless messages or flashlights or something into the sky where the whole village could read them. I explained that I wanted a man who could emblazon on the clouds in fire-red letters a foot long—

"Edith has forgotten the loaf."

"James ,, ,, the letters."

"William ,, ,, the paint."

Scarlet letters could be seen against any coloured sky during the day and possibly he might be able to illuminate them at night. My weakened mind was running on those brilliant lighted letter advertisements which you see in the sky all over London.

The Rainbow Maker soothed me with promises that we would see, first, what an ordinary bluejacket was like. We could go in for a specialist later, if necessary.

CHAPTER XVIII

TERRESTRIAL MAGNETISM

ANOTHER curious influence exercised by the moor upon humanity is our inability to retain anything in our hands.

Whatever we touch we drop. This, too, only happens at intervals. At times, we can hold things like other people. Whatever this spell is, it afflicts us more than it does the natives.

Some days, it is so wearing that we threaten to go to bed and stay there. You can't very well drop things in bed.

I am more affected than the Rainbow Maker. You cannot help it. It simply feels, the moment you try to take anything into your hands, as if it were being violently drawn downwards. You clutch wildly but it goes.

Dartmoor is full of metals and is said vaguely to be " very electric." There are certain spots on the moor which are invariably struck during a thunderstorm. This is said to be due to the presence of magnetic metal in the earth. You can tell, almost to a few yards, where cattle will

be killed in a storm. There was a cottage at Prince Town—it may be there still—which was struck with an unfailingness that became monotonous. Its inhabitants were always being taken out stunned, from the ruins of their kitchen grate.

Clocks and watches go mad immediately on arriving. It does not matter how expensive they may be. They always begin gaining wildly during the first few hours. If I take a watch for a few hours down to one of the towns, I always have to allow for ten minutes loss of time before my return. I learnt this fact one day by an exciting and expensive adventure. My watch lost its wonted ten minutes during my few hours in the town. But I did not realize this loss till I reached the station to see the tail lamp of the train steaming out. It was a main line train, but it was my last chance of catching the local connection for the moor. Aghast, I fled, without knocking, straight into the station-master's sanctum and called upon the staff to pity me. Instead of being annoyed with me for intruding, he did pity me so much that he assured me he would have stopped an express or put me into a goods if one had only been going down. Instead, he lent me a porter who fled with me to a motor garage where I ordered out a car and we raced the train. The humane station-master wired to

the local station-master to keep her a few minutes but he dared not do so indefinitely and as we cycloned into the junction the last moor train steamed out. Eventually, I was rescued and taken home by a humane gentleman farmer who advised me in a fatherly manner to " bide home a bit " as I had disturbed humanity enough for some months. Now I have learnt wisdom and allow for the ten minutes loss.

There was a certain summer when I broke every watch that came near me. It was unaccountable except by some mysterious magnetic moor influence. I did not do it by winding them. I simply wore them and in a few minutes the mainsprings snapped. The Rainbow Maker lent me all she could spare when I had finished up my own, and we were finally reduced to her last one which was put in a case and which I was forbidden under hideous penalties to touch. I forgot her threats and came in one evening wanting to know the time. I touched the face of the watch with my forefinger to turn it to the light, and it stopped instantly. At the same epoch, a pedometer was lent to me in good working order. I wore it ten minutes and that mainspring went.

These things never happened to me in London. When I got back I asked a jeweller to explain them but he could not. He said it suggested a

powerful electric current which did for the watch in a few minutes. But I was not conscious of such an influence.

However, I am at times an unresisting prey to what, for want of a better phrase, I call terrestrial magnetism. It begins as soon as I get up in the morning. I always begin the day by lighting my stove for hot water, and the first thing I do on such days is to drop the matches. The Rainbow Maker from her adjoining room hears the monotonous crashes and asks with sympathy, when I go to call her, if I have got it again.

I always feel inclined to go back to bed. Besides being maddening for me, it is both expensive and even dangerous for my fellow creatures.

At one time, I used to begin it the moment I arrived on Devon soil. I remember once stepping out of the express at Exeter and promptly dropping my gloves on the metals. A plate-layer squirmed down and rescued them.

Not long ago, I had a perfectly fearsome day during which Mr. Bluejacket suffered the worst reverses.

He was placidly scrubbing the scullery, down on his hands and knees, gooder than any gold, when suddenly a pair of scales crashed upon his bent head. He paused scrubbing, dazed, but before he had time to scream, the scales were

followed by a strainer. The visitation was so sudden and so inexplicable that he remained crouching in awed silence till the strainer was followed by a fish slice which hit not him but his bucket, into which it descended with a splash that half drowned the wounded bluejacket. That restored movement, if not speech. He hurriedly squirmed round on his knees to face the enemy and discovered me standing behind him in the doorway trying to take a small strainer off the hook on the shelf.

Now, when I am doing things, he retires to an unfrequented corner of the kitchen and stands at attention till it is safe to emerge. When he sees me bearing down upon him with a boiling saucepan, he drops everything he may be carrying and scurries to his corner till I have passed. When he first came, he used to retire before me in good order, boldly, in the open. Now he has learnt wisdom and prefers it to valour.

That particular day, the weary spell continued till the climax at evening when, Mr. Bluejacket being temporarily absent, I answered the door to the baker, promptly dropping the loaf he handed to me into a puddle of rainwater on the step.

He picked up the loaf, gave it to me again, this time dripping wet, and from his expression, he yearned to hit me over the head with it. A little

later, at dinner, when Mr. Bluejacket was handing me vegetables, I shot a succulent roasted potato into my lap, eliciting the sympathetic murmur, "It's a good thing for your dress, Miss, that your serviette was there." At the last course, I leant over to reach an apple and dropped it, plump, into a dish of jelly.

After that, I went straight to bed.

I wish someone would explain it and give me the remedy.

CHAPTER XIX

NOBLESSE OBLIGE

I WISH it did.

At times, I have been accused of idealizing, or, more justly, of only showing one side of the picture. Well, let us have a look at the other side and see how we like it.

Before I came to live on the moor, I had never been in personal contact with the manners of so-called gentlepeople that prevail in these regions.

Be it remembered, please, that I am an alien in Devon and a northerner to my spine bone. My rightful counties are Lancashire and Westmoreland. I mention this simply to show that my pictures of the moor and her people are consequently devoid of prejudice upon either side. I neither laud nor condemn my own county when I laud or condemn Devonians.

I have heard of snobs and of bad landlords and of selfish landowners, but I have never before been brought into personal contact with such nor seen the aggravation they cause to the working

classes. I am speaking of a fairly wide radius when I say that in this neighbourhood we have landowners who will not permit their own tenants to go into their copses and gather fallen wood during winter when work is scarce and prices high. Cartloads of dry dead wood lie rotting in the woods and copses year after year while the cottagers are forced to pay for their every stick of firewood, plus carting. There are also landowners who build up, bar and lock footpaths which are valuable short cuts to their own tenantry and neighbours, and who exclude the same from enjoying localities that are unique in beauty. They refuse permission even to ourselves and our poor ladies to pass one afternoon a month through their properties, just as they refuse similar permission to their own tenants, tired working people, who are condemned in consequence to make detours of several miles. These landowners never set foot in such places themselves. They are left to the wild things and the keepers. I am not indignant at the exclusion of the common tripper who leaves broken glass in places beautiful. On the contrary, I would joyously exterminate such persons with my own hands. My grievance is on behalf of natives, neighbours and tenants.

There are also landowners who rescind old commoners' rights to cut wood and peat upon their

manors. One grudges turf to his tenants because it spoils the look of the moor from his windows.

There are landowners who maintain their right to rear pheasants at the expense of their tenants' corn. That is, of course, a common plaint against English landowners.

There are landowners who permit the diversion of water upon their property when such water is the sole supply for some hamlet or other. They will treat the hapless complainants like dirt and force them into legal expenses, to secure a necessary of life, rather than insist upon decent order being kept. I have been told that there are landlords about here who charge their tenants five per cent. for repairs. This I cannot personally vouch for as I can for the other oppressions and injustices, and it is too dreadful to be believed.

As far as I am personally concerned, I do not know such men. I would not condescend to know them or to have them inside this house. But think what it is for the helpless working man who not only has to know them, but is in their power and has to look up to them. They wonder, some people do, that working men are radicals and socialists. If I were a man under such a landlord, I should be not merely a socialist but an anarchist.

I wonder if the day will ever come when we of the classes shall be great enough and just enough

to admit that the sins of the masses are upon our own heads?

What ought to be done to such men is to punish them in kind. Put them into a farm and let them sink their little all in produce for some neighbour's pheasants to feed upon. Let them live in a small cottage on a few shillings a week in winter, turn off their only drinking water, and refuse them turf and firewood because it is better to let these rot. Give them a rough job miles from home, let them hoof it, footsore and wet through, for miles out of their way because the footpaths are closed. Let their landlords spend princely sums in beautifying their own properties and refuse to put up the plainest cottage for their own workmen.

It would be interesting to see how the politics and religion of such landowners would stand the test.

If the humble villagers and natives of the district are outwardly forbearing with these snobs, it is dazzling to hear what they say of them behind their backs. The unerring instinct by which they recognize breeding even in rags is almost uncanny. They are never mistaken and they never take back their decision. One of her tenants was once discoursing on manners to the Rainbow Maker. He was as rough a fellow as you would find on the moor. He was describing a man who lives in the district. Quoth he—

"When her fust comed here about, I spoke to 'en fust day I met 'en."

(It must be explained that to "speak," here, means to salute. It is nothing to do with mere words at all.)

"Her tooked nc notice whativer. But as her was driving to the time I reckoned I'd give 'en one more chance, in a manner of speaking. Few weeks later, I met 'en again and I spoke again. Her tooked no notice whativer, and from that day to this I've never even looked at 'en and I nivver won't, neither."

It should be recorded that when this man met the Rainbow Maker and me together, he always solemnly touched his hat twice lest one salute should imply that one or other of us was not a lady.

I have never in my life before met a man in any grade of society who would not return a salute. One's mind almost refuses to act on the subject. How is he to be classified, and what are the inner workings of his so-called mind? It recalls the story of the Marquis and the Count, which I have told here more than once to the invariable delight of the native who hears it.

Once upon a time, a count and a marquis were walking together and they met a tramp who saluted them. The count took no notice, but

the marquis returned the salute. Said the count scornfully—

"A man of your rank to salute a tramp!"

Replied the marquis, "A man of my rank to allow a tramp to have better manners than myself!"

The marquis's moral was unconsciously repeated in another form by a small farmer living near here. One Sunday, he went home after chapel and remarked to his wife that he had met the new doctor walking on the road. She was quite sure he had not, because the doctor would never be all those miles from home walking on a Sunday morning. The husband stuck to his point and a discussion ensued. At last the wife asked how he knew or why he thought it was the doctor.

"Because he was a gentleman," was the reply.

"But how did you know that?"

"Because he touched his hat to the likes of me."

A really painful episode occurred once to me. I was walking with two men who had been lunching with us. One especially was rather a distinguished man whose arrival had caused a little mild excitement in the place. As we walked, a farm labourer's wife appeared in sight—a woman whom I knew well. I bowed to her as usual and, naturally, the two men raised their hats. After I had seen them off, I was returning alone and met

the woman again, her face scarlet and glazed with tears. Horrified, I stopped to inquire into her sudden trouble.

She promptly broke down again and at last sobbed out, "Oh, Miss Beatrice, you are a dear darling. 'Tis too much for me altogether. Fancy you speaking to me when you was with they two grand gentlemen."

I was struck speechless, and she concluded, "I never thought to see the day when two gentlemen would take their hats off to me."

When she was a little calmer and able to explain, I pleaded for enlightenment. Then it transpired that it was the custom of a certain "gentle" family here, when they were out with their own visitors, to cut all working people. Mr. and Mrs. Bounder would speak to working people if no one else witnessed their degradation, but if "company" were with them they gave the cut direct.

I thought it over till my dazed mind had more or less grasped the situation. In such cases one has to accept the objective. One cannot pretend to take the subjective view. The thing is a mystery. But I asked one last question. "Tell me, Louisa, do you seriously affirm that they take no notice whatever of you when they are with people, and that next day, if they meet you alone, they expect you to take any notice of them?"

"Why, yes, Miss Beatrice. And if I didn't take no notice, my manners would be no better'n theirs."

I can give another incident which will illustrate what these Nature's gentlefolk must have suffered from their so-called betters. An old gentleman was once staying with us. He had a long white beard which gave him a severely patriarchal appearance. One morning, I noticed a little knot of excited cottagers whispering together and watching for something. The most excited was a ragged young rapscallion of about ten.

"What's the excitement?" I inquired.

It was Louisa who replied.

"Why, Miss Beatrice, Bill here saith that th' old gentleman touched his hat to a cheel like he and us don't believe 'en. Bill saith if us waits till her comes back, he'll make her do it again."

I retired to an obscure spot to see the exhibition, which my obnoxious presence might have prejudiced. In due time the old gentleman appeared, returning. Bill marched out, very erect, and touched his hat in passing. The old gentleman gravely saluted, unconscious of the signals of defiance from Bill behind his back to the vanquished group by the cottages.

Later, I told the old man the tale. Like us, he could not grasp the ethics of the matter.

But now, in conclusion, let me record that we have landowners here who permit their tenants to gather dead wood in their copses free of charge all the year round and who will always give a day's rabbiting in the winter to any working man who asks it. There are also some who actually risk the damaging presence of us and our poor ladies through their properties without restrictions as to days or hours.

I want to record, too, a sweet story about one of our landowners who is a Devonian, the lord of a moor manor, and a gentleman in the true sense of that most beautiful word. The tale was told to me by the farmer concerned. The farmer was an elderly man and, on market day, he was carrying a very heavy basket of eggs through the streets of the town. The gentleman was on the other side of the road, but he crossed to the farmer's side and said with a smile, "Mr. M——, I am a younger and a stronger man than you. Do let me carry that basket into market for you."

The farmer was really overburdened and really glad of help. So he permitted the favour.

"Now, that's a gentleman," he said, in concluding the story. "Crossed out of his way to offer and did it so sweet and gentle as if 'twas a pleasure, and in a street too with all the people looking on. There's a gentleman."

As for the other sort, the sooner they are handed over to "mob" law and the game of tit for tat, the better I shall be pleased. They degrade our honourable class and do more harm than all the political agitators in the country.

Since writing this, Charles Kingsley's powerful ballad, *The Bad Squire*, has suddenly recurred to my memory. It is years since I read it, but it is a magnificent outburst of indignation against oppression of the poor. Kingsley was a Devonshire, even a Dartmoor man. Indeed, he lived for some years at Holne, so it is possible that his "bad squire" was a forbear of one of my present bugbears.

The farmer aforementioned is a gentleman though he is furious if you tell him so. But I remember, though he no doubt forgets, a piece of consideration he once showed to me.

We were having to make a "culvert" over a certain stream, to keep the cattle from standing in it. The Rainbow Maker was away and I did not know what a culvert was. Altogether I was feeling rather depressed and incompetent. On my morning walk, I met the farmer. He pulled up his horse—on a hill, too—and asked what I was going to do about the culvert—which I found was a little rough stone bridge. I replied, "Nothing yet. I don't know what it is or who to order."

Then he told me everything, warned me which workman to procure and, above all, not to make "a mason's job of it at 4*s.* 6*d.* a day when a labourer at 3*s.* will do it all so well."

He cared, that kind old man did, to save me 1*s.* 6*d.*

The same mason heartily concurs in such advice, which he administers himself whenever he has the chance. Once I was having rather an extensive bit of wall building done, so I went to order him. He listened to my explanations and then entirely refused to come. He explained that, for quite a week, an ordinary labourer accustomed to "work stone" would do the beginning quite as well as a mason and it would save me one shilling and sixpence a day. I said I did not mind the extra money and wanted it to be a very firm job. But he flatly refused to undertake it on account of the unnecessary expense to me, and only arrived at the end of the week when cementing was necessary.

After hearing from the ill-used cottagers themselves of their having to cart and pay for wood all the winter, I came home, seething with fury, and confided in Mr. Bluejacket. He is always sorry for my troubles, no matter what they are. In his quiet way he was as furious as I with the "bad squire." Then he became reflective and told the following story.

"Did you know Bishop Phillpotts to Torquay, Miss? No? Well, he had a wood and 'twas a short cut home for the fishermen and they used to use it regular. They'd no right to, for it was private property. One morning, the bishop was out early and caught a fisherman cutting through home to his breakfast from his lobster pots.

The bishop said, "What's your name, my man?"

"Bishop, sir," replied the fisherman.

"Oh," said the bishop. "And do you know me?"

"No, sir."

"Well, I'm Bishop Phillpotts."

"Oh, are you, sir?" said the fisherman. "Well, I'm Bishop Emptypotts, for I've caught nothing through the night."

The bishop was so charmed that he presented him with five shillings on the spot and then had a walk made through his woods and gave the fishermen the right of way through the property.

"You see, Miss," concluded Mr. Bluejacket. "He was a gentleman—and a Christian."

CHAPTER XX

DARTMOOR (K)NIGHTS

SOME winters ago the Rainbow Maker was waited on by a deputation of men from the village to ask her if she would allow her ladies' cottage to be used as a reading-room for the winter evenings.

In such a place as this, night is night. There is no public lighting at sundown. Nature here is autocratic. At whatever hour through the year she chooses to draw the curtains over daylight, work has to cease.

It makes our days very very short during the darkest months, and the evenings for the men are very monotonous. The women keep all their sewing for winter nights, but when outdoor work is done, the men have no occupation.

They thought that a room with a nice fire and plenty to read, with pictures to look at and games to play would be most welcome.

The Rainbow Maker agreed to lend her cottage and to provide the fire, the lamp, and as many periodicals as she could muster. She also promised to procure some table games.

When her decision became publicly known, wiseacres arrived, bursting with good advice.

Two lone lorn ladies did not want a gang of rough men skylarking around every night in the pitch dark. A similar room had been tried before, but had been closed on account of rowdyism. If this had been the case, certainly the men would not respect a mere crippled widow lady and we should have endless trouble and annoyance.

The Rainbow Maker received the advice with her customary monumental incredulity and sent for the man whom she had chosen to be secretary, so to speak, of the reading-room. She told him of the warnings she had received and said she knew there would be nothing of the sort in her room. The man assured her earnestly that she was right. She then put every member on his honour not to gamble, not to use bad language, to come and go quietly, and never to be one minute later than 10 p.m. in closing. She explained that there was no one to control or supervise them, so she was, perforce, compelled to leave them to it.

They promised, the room opened and flourished. To reach it, they had to pass under our windows. Not only was there no rowdyism, there was not even ordinary conversation as they went by. The only sound of their coming and going was the tramp of hobnailed boots.

After the first week or so, a polite request reached the Rainbow Maker that the fire should not be lighted until the first man arrived, because their hours of arrival varied according to weather and circumstances. Also, might they be favoured with a resident pair of tongs. The Rainbow Maker agreed blindly to both requests, but ventured an inquiry as to their meaning. It was thereupon explained to her that the fire must cost a lot every night for all those hours and it was a certain saving if it was not lighted at any regular hour, but left until the first man came.

The ethics of the tongs we found out for ourselves next morning. They had been used at closing time in order to pick every scrap of unburnt wood out of the embers. Fragments of wood of all sizes, even the fine twigs of the faggot wood had been collected and piled into a tidy little heap in one corner of the hearthstone. The men had been watching to see how the fire was laid every day and had found no wood ends. They consequently decided that the woman who cleaned the hearth was extravagant and took the law into their own hands.

This reading-room flourished successfully and decorously for some time. Then it occurred to some enterprising spirit that the nights might be used for something better than mere recreation.

Accordingly the Rainbow Maker was again approached, this time with a request to hold classes for the men, upon various subjects. Again she agreed and gave them an hour every evening upon such subjects as commercial geography, history, dictation, business letter writing and scripture. Ambulance lessons also formed a feature, and the things they did with the wounded, the suffocating and the bleeding froze your very marrow. To drop an unconscious man off a hurdle on his head was a mere jest to them.

The ages of scholars at the classes ranged from twenty to seventy. They said it " opened a new world."

By degrees they went out into situations, or married or took farms, and the thing dropped for some time.

Then the youths of the village took the matter up—beings of the hooligan age from fifteen to twenty. Two visited the Rainbow Maker one Sunday afternoon, dressed to death, even with flowers in their buttonholes. They demanded a night school " like what the men had had."

The Rainbow Maker hesitated, for she had become recently much more crippled and she did not know if she would be physically capable of turning out every night after dinner in the cold and the rain and the dark. The boys reassured her with

promises that they would fetch her and smooth her painful way if she would only try.

So she tried and they did fetch her. There was some competition on the point, but this was settled by taking the honour in turns. Every evening, a knight arrived with a large lantern. He opened the gate and closed it behind her, held her gently by one arm all the way, and carried the lantern down where its light illumined every stone and puddle. Another knight carried her bag of books. Arrived at the cottage, they handed her carefully into her chair, took her sticks and put them in a safe corner. When class was over, the sticks were procured unasked, and the procession formed again.

On very wild nights, a second boy was told off to hold the Rainbow Maker's other arm lest she should be blown down. The knight with the lantern on one side only was not considered enough in a gale.

Wet nights bothered them badly. The Rainbow Maker's progress is majestically slow and she got unduly wet, as she cannot hold up an umbrella. The knights consulted among themselves, and one triumphantly produced a fearsome thing in the shape of a huge old-fashioned gig umbrella of a weight that he could hardly support with both hands. This necessitated a third escort in rain, and what they all did with that gig umbrella in the wind

and the pitch dark can hardly be described. An aeroplane could scarcely have been more dangerous. It was quite uncontrollable in a heavy gale on account of its weight. It was too dark to see the Rainbow Maker clearly, so they could only make wild passes to cover her. At times, these resulted in spiking her firmly by the hair of her head. Eventually, to our immense relief, the gig umbrella got broken beyond repair.

And these were the roughest boys in the place, for whom, in some instances, their masters had not one good word.

CHAPTER XXI

A DARTMOOR DAY

ACCUSTOMED though we are to the fertile versatility of Dartmoor weather, I never saw such a variety as we had yesterday.

We woke to white frost—a fairy world wherein every twig was as though carved in marble and gemmed with diamond dust.

That was soon followed by drenching ice-cold rain which washed away all King Frost's fragile work.

Then came King Sun and a breathless stillness like the prelude to a storm. The light was sharper and clearer than any haze-shot summer's day. It was the crystal clearness of bad weather, with a violet-blue sky and splendid blue-black clouds anchored upon it.

In a couple of hours the light stole away, the anchored clouds set sail again, and a palpable darkness enshrouded us.

It was scarcely light enough even to read, so I sat by the blazing fire listening to the low growling of the thunder, the occasional flashes of lightning

and the hissing of the hailstones as they pattered down the chimney into the fire. For a few minutes after the storm the moor was white, then Sun returned, and the glittering beauty of the drenched world made one blink at its splendour.

Thus the day marched by with summer and winter in her arms, robed in gold, black, white, blue—sun-kissed and lightning-crowned.

During the still bright intervals, busy little wrens with their cocked tails worked nimbly in and out of our old walls.

Often I have watched a wren patrol a stretch of wall, and there is not one hole or crevice, however tiny, that escapes him.

How I wish I could make myself small enough to creep into a Dartmoor wall! Some of the crevices are a foot deep, running back far beyond the reach of rain or snow or frost, and lined with warm mosses. Many of the birds here build in these holes and I never wonder at their wisdom. Our walls give shelter to countless living creatures. There is the large insect world which inhabits them, besides many birds, mice, rabbits, weasels, snakes—any creature that wants a shelter is welcome.

During yesterday's storms, the dainty wrens popped into a hole till the sun shone again, while the sparrows retired into the thick holly tree outside our lower door. I watched that tree a good

deal yesterday. For one thing, its leaves and berries looked gorgeous in the sunshine after each shower. There are still a number of berries left so late into the spring as this is. For another thing, the sparrows were unusually garrulous, and in the very sweetest temper, all of them. As a rule, the language which issues from that tree is not fit for any decent bird to hear. It is always particularly violent at bedtime. Outside this window is an old wall covered with thick ivy which contains what I call a "Cheepery." This is a settlement of sparrows. One flock lives there and another round in the holly tree, the other side. The holly tree is a south aspect while my cheepery is due north. In the summer mornings they begin their "Cheep, cheep" at four o'clock or thereabouts, with a tremendous whirring of wings. This flock yesterday was quite decorous, but what was going on in Holly Tree House I can't even imagine.

The day cleared as evening came and sunset was one golden glitter that mere human eyes could hardly bear. The entire absence of wind caused a perfect stillness in every tree and bush, so there was not the least movement to disturb reflection. Not a leaf is out yet, so every bare wet stem was a study in wrought gold. All the fine tips and twigs were a golden lacework. Every straw of

every roof had its own brilliant raindrop which reflected the sinking sun. There was not one object to be seen which was not glittering gold,—exaggerated, magnified, refracted gold.

After dark, I was hanging out of my north bedroom window looking across to the west when I suddenly saw, sticking straight up against the dusk sky out of the dusker hill-rim, a bright silver-gold dagger blade or spear point or sword tip. Nothing was to be seen except the long sable line of hill against the lighter sky and, in the highest point of the hill, this shining dagger pointing upwards. As I watched, fascinated, it slowly disappeared as if drawn downwards by some mighty unseen hand on the other side of the hill.

Strange that never in my life should I have happened to see the crescent moon set.

CHAPTER XXII

ANIMALS, WILD AND TAME

In the worst weather, or when I am busiest, in other words, when I am writing a book, I severely take myself twice a day up our nearest hill, which is only a few hundred yards from this house and happens, by rare good luck, to be one of the worst hills in the county. Not only its perpendicular steepness, but also its wicked S-like curves have earned it this reputation. When the roadmenders operate on it, there is a large section of it which cannot be rolled by any means known to nature or science. We have to tramp the loose stones in with feet and hoofs and wheels. Some people earnestly curse this hill. I consider it one of our great blessings.

First, it protects us from motor traffic. Cars *can* come up and down it, but this involves much strain on the gear, and great wear of the tyres.

Secondly, it has kept more people in rude health than all the doctor's medicine ever consumed in the village. If you walk that hill twice a day without stopping, you cannot have much the matter

with nerves or digestion, while lungs and heart must be of the soundest. To vanquish it, you are compelled to deeper breathing than all the artificial exercises in the world can cause. You have absolutely got to get down to the bottom of your lungs—or die of suffocation in the ditch. We once had a woman here who breathed, as many women do, only with the tops of her lungs and who was also developing fatty degeneration of the heart. The doctor examined her and explained why she ought to learn deep breathing. After a bit he gave it up and said, "Make her walk up your native hill twice a day and that'll teach her how to breathe better than any directions. Going up there, she has got to breathe—or strangle."

Urbanites are so quaint about it. They consider it fatiguing and almost dangerous to walk up such a hill. They say it makes their hearts beat and they get out of breath. It never occurs to them that these symptoms show the hill's utility. It causes us all to use muscles in our hearts and lungs which would never otherwise get exercised. They are so funny, too, about perspiration, are urbanites. When they arrive here and see or experience it in all its healthy naturalness, they regard it as some devastating scourge. I once took a city-bred young woman to see a farmer "banking up potatoes." This means driving a

single-coultered plough between the lines of plants to make furrows. It is rather corkscrewy work, and the man, who had a particularly fine skin, was sweating freely. Large drops were pattering off his face on the earth and running down his chiselled nose in showers. The girl was horrified and indignant. She first pitied him for his dangerous condition and then anathematized farming as cruel work. The farmer was furious with her. Our men have as fine an appreciation for "sweat," as they naturally call it, as any proprietor of a Turkish bath has.

In hay time, which is the hottest work of the whole year, they mop streaming faces and compare notes proudly as to which is wettest. One old farmer who taught me hay-making was immensely delicate about it to me. He began operations by telling me a fascinating little baby story about some pixies—"pisky," as the natives pronounce it.

Once upon a time, some little piskies wondered what it was like to work. They decided to find out by experience, so they hunted about for work, but all they could find was to steal some bricks from a certain farmer's barn. They worked away, carrying these bricks from the barn to their own fairy dwellings. At last, the unaccustomed toil made them sweat, which was an entirely new sensation. And one little pisky said to another,

"Do you tweat? I tweat. I don't like it and I reckon us won't do any more work."

At first, I saw no point whatever in the story. But as I worked, it developed. He watched me growing redder and redder and at last he laughed and said wickedly, "Be you like the piskies yet?" He was too polite to say plainly to a lady, "Are you sweating?" That was his password on the subject. He used it for years, and always roared with delight if I ever met him at his hottest and remarked, "I reckon you'm like the piskies today."

The other men never could fathom the jest. As we all worked by the rick, they used to look at me and wonder what there was about me which resembled a pisky.

Our redoubtable hill possesses this further advantage: it is impossible to walk up it in the coldest weather without all the pores of your skin getting healthily to work, so, no doubt, it has saved much rheumatism in its day and will save much more.

I went for my climb early this morning before beginning work. At the foot of the hill I met the woodcutter with the feeble memory. He is elderly and a dear. He was going my way so we mounted together and the talk turned on animals.

After many years spent upon the moor from

birth, he is wondrous wise upon the subject. We meandered to a discussion upon animals in storm, and he described how differently each species takes a storm.

"You notice, Miss Beatrice, next time us gets a brave storm of wind and rain how they all does. Bullocks always stand side to 'en."

That much I had already noticed. You can scarcely live with cattle practically in your rooms without seeing this peculiarity.

"You notice a horse," he continued. "He'll face it—always. Runs into it. Sheep now, they'm just the contrary, they turn tail and run before it. But a hare be the 'cutest little baste. Her'll have a little nest o' fern for ivery wind that blaws. If you'm snaring and you go into her lairs, you'll find her little nesties, one facing every one o' the four ways. An' a lapwing, her's another 'cute thing. They build on the ground, mostly in bog land, so they'm liable to be took quicker than tree birds. So if her thinks her young be in danger, her'll run along the ground with one wing lapping, as if 'twas wounded, till her's drawed the man right away from the nest, and then her'll rise up and fly back when her thinks he've a gone. A gen'l'man told me th' other day that he was coming 'cross Southway moor one evening and surprised a lapwing with her

brood of young out walking away from the nest, same as a hen and chickens might be. Her hadn't time to hide the young and they was too weak to run so her turned on the gen'l'man to kill 'en. Her spread out her wings and bristled up her feathers and opened her bake and rushed at 'en. He said he never felt sich a big brute in all his life, and he turned and runned right away as if he was frit, just to put things right for her. Never saw sich pluck in his life, in man or baste, he said."

Here, his way parted from mine. He went off to his three-quarters of a day's work and I returned to my writing.

Snakes are creatures with curious habits. We have many of them on the moor. They are mostly what are called here "water snakes," about two feet long and exactly the same colour as a viper, only differently marked and with white bellies. The vipers have, of course, the continuous black herring-bone chain down their backs and are smaller, with black bellies. The so-called water snakes are, I believe, what is more correctly called "grass snake." They are exceedingly fond of water, however, which has no doubt earned them their local name. These beautiful creatures have a curious habit of trying to invade the houses during the month of July, which is their breeding season. No one can ever make out why this is,

because they are the most timid of beings. Often, in July month, one will hear a frightful hullaballoo going on among the hens, which turns out to be caused by the arrival of a snake in the farmyard. Hens absolutely loathe snakes. This house and the farm have many times been besieged by a snake, both by the back door and the front. They are, of course, perfectly harmless and their one idea is to get inside. If they are driven off one day, they will return the next at the same hour. A strange thing is their punctuality. Many times I have seen a farmer going off with a stick to kill a viper which he has seen that hour the previous day in a hedge somewhere. And the viper is always there. Luckily, vipers don't appear as anxious to live with us as the water snakes do. These succeeded, many years ago, in gaining unsuspected entrance to a neighbouring farm where they became a serious nuisance. When it came to killing six a day in the kitchen, the inhabitants decided they had had enough of that particular game, so as the snakes appeared to come from the wall behind the kitchen range, this was removed, and what is described here as " black basketsful " of snakes, young and old, were found in the rough stone wall. The wall was smoothly cemented and all possible snakes were killed, but they still get them in at times. Here we have so far success-

fully defeated their intentions and I have, bottled in spirit, a very fine specimen that was killed the second day of its siege on our doorstep.

This pairs with a viper which I killed myself in the field just opposite. It is a field with a very sheltered south aspect in which I used to sit one sunny frosty December. A few days before Christmas, after I had arisen from my sun bath to go to lunch, I saw to my amazement a beautiful little viper coiled up in the hedge, also sunning itself, where it must have been sitting only a few inches from the nape of my unconscious neck, which I have a trick of leaning back against our solid banks. I wanted a viper specimen badly and it also struck me that a Christmas viper would be quite a unique possession. So I went back at the same hour next day and killed it. It taught me an undying lesson. I shall never kill another. I never, in all my life, felt so loathsomely mean. We are supposed never to overlook a viper for the sake of the cattle, but after all, it is not my business to protect the cattle, and they very rarely get bitten—never unless they step on the snake. I hit three blows and half killed it before it even tried to strike. Its one idea was to get away, not to bite. Naturalists always say a snake never bites unless it is hurt. I proved that theory up to the hilt. I had half killed it before it would even turn. Then

it blindly reared its head in the true snake style and hit out wildly with wide open mouth and lowered fangs. Oh, what a cur I felt! But I had to finish my deed, for it was by then too badly hurt to be left. Poor little thing! There it was perfectly good, enjoying the sun just as I enjoyed it, and suddenly an awful bludgeon arrived to beat its harmless little life out.

It was the slaughter of that snake which has made me more than ever pitiful to wrongdoers. If my conscience can feel as it always will feel about the excusable action of killing a dangerous reptile, what must a man's conscience feel when he has done a dirty deal, injured someone weaker than himself, or deceived someone who trusts him? Nothing in the wide world can ever undo the consequences of his meanness. He may repent and make reparation and punish himself unmercifully, but nothing can undo the consequences of his sin, even if its guilt is forgiven, any more than anything can give its life back to my poor little viper again. Shallow people complain that some women are too forgiving to men who have been curs and scoundrels. They say also that it was unfair that the prodigal son of the parable should have received so much love and even public honour from his father while the good son was seemingly passed over. If such people did but understand they would know that

women are merciful to men because the more stainless they are themselves, the more they realize by force of contrast the unutterable horrors of a guilty conscience. It is the same moral with the father in the parable. He knows that all his affection cannot restore his son's innocence. It can only be balm to the wound.

People must be either very good or very bad to realize the misery of sin. A man who had been a great sinner once said to me, "It's the *memory*. You may have been forgiven and may have heroically expiated your sin. But you can never again have a stainless memory."

It broke my heart, the world of hopeless wretchedness that his words opened out.

Always, when in contact with a wrongdoer, I ask them the same question: "Was it ever worth while?" And man or woman, Christian or infidel, they all say the same thing: "Never—even at its best moment. I expected it would be, but it never was."

From which one may safely argue that even if there were no future life, no rewards and no punishments, it is worth while to maintain a clean conscience.

As I look up, now and then, from my writing, I see the baby bull gazing pensively at me from the field opposite. He is such a little beauty, red from

his chin to the tip of his tail. He has little white horns about three inches long and a smooth, shining, flesh-coloured nose which is always moist and always consequently reflects the sun. When he wants to blow this same nose, he does it as neatly as all his kind do. He shoots out a soft, pointed tongue, something the shape of a snake's, and curves it gracefully into one nostril. Then he withdraws it, curves it into the other, and behold a cleverly blown nose. The bullock species is the only one I know which attends to its nose. This bull is about the size of a donkey or a little smaller. He has no copper ring yet in his nose, so he cannot be turned six months old. At six months they are ringed. His neck is the real bull neck, thick, graceful and full of deep creases. He lets me go and tickle his nose because he doesn't yet know that he is a bull and ought, therefore, to maintain a reputation for savagery. Not that our Dartmoor bulls ever are savage, or if they are I have never seen one. They live always in a large field and are never confined indoors, which I think explains their sweetness of temper. One on an adjoining farm would let the children go and pick primroses from under his ringed and amiable nose. Another further away was always escaping from his field and coming to seek water which his master was careless in administering. He broke out, one evening late,

and couldn't get back, so, being tired, he lay down in the middle of the high-road and fell peacefully asleep. Night descended, a moonless and a starless night which swathed the bull in invisibility. A working man returning briskly homewards, fell over him, and he has never since been able to say which of the two of them was the most terrified.

Foreigners have a wild idea that the bulls are loose about the moor. Of course, they never are. The farmers are mighty particular on the point and would be prosecuted if they let them loose.

As for our dogs, it is edifying to see how well they agree among themselves. A dog fight is the rarest thing here. It is only now and then that a difference of opinion arises even between strange dogs. They usually salute each other, speak kindly, pass the time of day in a few whines or grunts and continue their way.

They don't like fancy dogs that come with the visitors, though. A little black ball of fluff came to stay near here, one summer, a kind of Pekinese, and its luckless owners tried, daily, to bring it past this house. For some inscrutable reason, every time the Tweed Dog saw it she became as one possessed. She proceeded to kill it on the spot by one of her silent bristling springs. If it eluded her, being smaller and more nimble, she would pursue it like a lunatic, heedless of all our yells. Its

owners, very properly, said rude things about the Tweed Dog which I passed on to her with interest. They said they never knew anything so mean as to attack a dog half the size of yourself. This was nothing to the insults which I heaped on her, but she was shameless and incorrigible. They had at last either to carry it or go round the other way. The possible explanation to my mind was that she did not know it was a dog, but thought it was some new wild animal to be hunted.

But a prettier feature of life here is the friendship between different species of animals. Cats and dogs love one another. It never occurs to any moorland dog that a cat is an enemy, and no moor cat scratches a dog's nose except under severe provocation. On the contrary, she flirts with him instead.

I have already described the friendship between the Tweed Dog and Tiger-r. In *The Heart of the Moor* I recorded the affection of the young pig for the terrier. The cat-and-dog affection applies, as I say, universally. At a neighbouring farm, for instance, after dinner any day, you could see the edifying spectacle of a stout, elderly, brindled sheep dog taking his siesta with a tabby kitten between his front paws.

A more curious, though perhaps a more mercenary friendship, was one between a tortoiseshell cat

rejoicing in the attractive name of "Kattern," and the cow, Widehorns. The cats here keep a sharp look-out at milking time and usually escort the milkers to the shippens. There they sit, silent and watchful. There is always the forlorn chance that a pail of milk may be left standing about by a thoughtless man or maid, and if this happens, the cats make the most of the opportunity. They are passionately fond of milk warm from the cow.

Every evening at milking time, Kattern would run to the shippen, pick out Widehorns from among the other red Devon beauties and make love to her. The cow knew the cat and was sweet to her. She would lower her splendid head till Kattern could reach her great nose and would hold it down while the cat stood on her hind legs to rub her head frantically against the cow, purring loudly. We never could make out why Widehorns was always the favoured beast. No doubt Kattern had some reason for it which we were too dense to perceive.

She never took the least notice of any other cow.

Sheep hate cats, by the way. One cat standing in the middle of the farmyard when the shepherd wants to move his flock about at shearing time, will petrify the entire lot. The sheep will stand panting and quivering till the aggravated shepherd orders the cat off with more ardour than breeding.

The Tweed Dog has a horse to which she is ridiculously attached. They sleep together in the same stable. In winter, all is peace and joy, but when summer comes and the mare sleeps out, the Tweed Dog becomes unendurable. If she is left unchained, she manages somehow to break out of the stable, even if it is through the window, and she is found, in the morning, lying in the field, asleep by the mare's side. If this is remedied by chaining her, she barks the entire night and has no voice in the morning beyond a husky whisper.

When the mare is turned into a field during the dinner-hour, the Tweed Dog will even forsake this window to visit her.

It is so strange, because the mare apparently takes no notice whatever of her.

There was another horse named Jumbo who always, when coming from market, stopped alongside a certain field gate at the foot of a big hill and waited till his fares alighted. He never once mistook the gate. Sometimes they would be talking and would unconsciously make to pass it. But Jumbo was inflexible. He always halted and declined to move till they had dismounted to walk the hill.

A curious thing happened one day with a town horse that was brought out here in a wagonette with a party of trippers. It was all right while

they had walls on either side, but the moment they came to the open moor, the horse went mad with fright. It shied at every boulder and stared round with starting eyes at the great open spaces. The driver could do nothing with it and the people were compelled to walk the whole way on here while he turned round and went home. The poor beast was sweating with terror and trembling in every limb at our terrible moor.

One curious thing which befalls us in the old houses on Dartmoor is that tortoiseshell butterflies live with us all the winter. They have a certain corner on an upper landing in this house—a very sheltered angle where they congregate about the end of September. They sit in an ordinary shut-up position without moving once till the end of March. You don't have to move them, or they promptly die. We used to be most concerned and put them in the sun and tried to feed them with syrup and flowers. It always killed them. Now, we leave them entirely alone, not even dusting the ceiling till they have done with it, and we are rewarded by seeing and hearing the lovely things dancing against the window panes in the first bright March sun. But they don't leave us even then. If we open a window they retire hurriedly further back into the room.

Occasionally, I see letters in the local press from

people who have seen the first tortoiseshell butterfly of the season, and I wonder whether they would believe me if I wrote saying we have tortoiseshell butterflies out here all the winter as sleeping partners and yet we give ourselves no airs?

CHAPTER XXIII

DIALECT

I AM indebted to many kind readers for comments, suggestions and information concerning dialect and customs mentioned in my last book.

One scholar has written to me about the word "kentle," used here to describe a hundredweight. He tells me it is identical with the Spanish word "Quintal," which is pronounced as I have spelt our form. This is interesting, as there is a vague tradition that some Spaniards from the Armada drifted out here, which theory might also be borne out by the very brunette colouring of some of the natives.

Another linguist, more sorrowfully than angrily, asks why I never thought to look in a common French dictionary, where I should find the word "quintal" as an ordinary vulgar word meaning an ordinary vulgar hundredweight. Of course, I flew at once for the dic. and there the word is, so my humiliation is now complete. A common colloquial French word, and I didn't know it! But I am really aggrieved that the learned M.A.

of Oxford with whom I discussed it, did not know it either. He is a schoolmaster too. Perhaps that accounts for it. I suppose we may now safely assume that the word is of Latin descent.

This correspondent also tells me that the exclamation "No fey" is used in Breton, and also "ferial" for book cover and the sense of the word "snake flower." I forget what is the Breton for this but the meaning is identical with ours. I have lately heard several words and phrases hitherto unknown to me—words and phrases in common use among the natives, not things picked out of guide books and dialect dictionaries.

For instance, the Rainbow Maker was telling to one of the men a dire tale about a certain deceitful chit of a girl, and after listening with grave, sympathetic disapproval, the man commented, "I never don't like two faces under one hat."

If anyone can give me a better and quainter definition of deceitfulness than that is, I shall be pleased to receive such.

The dear old "architect" who refused our cheque suffers torments from rheumatism. One day he was describing what he went through some nights after getting into bed. Said he: "'Tis my legs. They bain't contented, like. 'Tis no odds where I put 'em, they wun't bide contented, no place."

"Maskell" is the word for caterpillar. "Mores" is roots.

Ordinarily, when we employ the word "callous" we use it rather rarely as, for instance, in describing a "callous disposition."

Here, they use it commonly to express hardness. "'Tis got callous," "'Tis too callous."

When you ask a convalescent how he is, instead of saying, clumsily and verbosely, "Getting better, thank you," he answers in one word, "Bettering."

Their word "tress" for plait of hair is poetry and French, if you add the 'e' to it. The word plait is never used. I "tress" my hair every morning, I don't "plait" it.

"Mother-mazed" is descriptive of any child passionately fond of its mother. "Mazed" designates any form of harmless lunacy.

"I be mazed 'bout blue," remarked one maid to me. She does like everything about her to be blue.

"Butter be mazed twice a year, they say," said another when she was trying to cut thin bread-and-butter with butter as hard as marble. Its other form of "mazedness" is, of course, when it turns to oil in the dog days.

For another instance, I am "moor-mazed."

When a horse has not been broken, they say he isn't yet "way wise."

" Creamed with the cold " suggests a coagulated condition with cold.

" Crammy old weather " is hot rain and mist.

When they want to describe a particularly dirty day, they say " 'Tis raining muck."

I had a lot of trouble getting at the meaning of one word. They never can either spell them or translate them. You can only ask what the process is as described by the word. " It un't going to bittle." I had not the vaguest idea what " bittle " meant. They had not the vaguest idea what word I should use instead of it.

I asked how it would be used, and after much thought they say, " Why, if you was to plant a turmet and it all went up to green leaves and had no root, that would be not bittling." " Running to seed " would be our nearest approach to the meaning, I suppose.

They will also urge on a workman to " Do it vitty, now." Or " Do it so kinly as you can."

" Brave " is used for emphasis. " Brave rain " for pelting rain. " Brave hurry."

Weird things used to happen to the Rainbow Maker when she first began to cope with the dialect. I used to be quite nervous about leaving her alone. She did not misunderstand out-and-out, and end decently. She mistranslated. It is a much more vicious form of non-comprehension

and renders you more liable to be taken for a lunatic.

For instance, in our very early days here, I trusted her to answer the door to the baker. When I returned, I asked if he had called and she said "No." The only visitor had been a man with a telegram, who also asked her if she wanted a drive. It was the telegram which gave me the clue. The bakery is, of course, at the post office. I sank into a chair and said, "Break gently to me exactly what you both said."

"He gave me the telegram and asked if I wanted a drive," reported the Rainbow Maker glibly. "I said 'No,' and asked if he were licensed, in case we ever did want him, you know. He seemed puzzled and said 'No,' and went away."

The full horror of the situation broke on me. The man had offered her "brad," which she had worked into "drive"—how, I don't know, but she had. She apparently understood perfectly, so from his standpoint, when offered a loaf she refused it and asked if he were licensed.

I tottered to the village to eat dirt. It was not so much having to carry the rejected loaf home, but the painful necessity of explaining that the Rainbow Maker cannot understand the dialect. Some people might have been greatly annoyed. Luckily, he was amused.

On another occasion, a servant asked the Rainbow Maker where she should find the tablecloth. The girl was ready to lay dinner. The Rainbow Maker cheerfully responded, "Oh, we are having mince for dinner to-night, so we shan't want it."

The girl stood too petrified even to move. I revived quicker and asked the Rainbow Maker what she thought she had been asked. She replied proudly, "Alice asked me if we want the carving-knife laid. I told her we don't as there is mince."

Do you see? Alice would have solemnly laid the dishes upon the bare mahogany and would have said the Rainbow Maker told her to. The Rainbow Maker would have indignantly denied it. There is absolutely no knowing where the thing might have ended but for my intervention. I often wonder what used to happen when I was not there to interpret. Of course, she has learnt it by now.

In my last book I mentioned that they use the word "stag" here for "cock." Lately, I have been told by an omniscient visitor that I lie about the matter. No one could possibly be so insane as to call a cock a stag, he urged. I could only maintain that they did—to lose my reputation as a truthteller.

So I proudly publish a recent advertisement

from our beloved daily, *The Devon and Exeter Gazette.*

PROPERTIES FOR SALE.

FOUR STAG TURKEYS for stock purposes; two Rhode Island Red Stags, 6*s.* each; 13 Slip Pigs. —1,832, *Gazette* Office, Exeter.

(Don't sue me, Mr. Editor, for infringement of copyright. It isn't poetry. Besides, I am quoting "for purposes of fair comment.")

Well, that more or less proves it, doesn't it? A farmer doesn't sell stags of the deer sort, and not for six shillings each.

Yah!

A lady has written to me, from the other side of the moor, two letters which might be more adequately described as essays about old customs. She generously gives me leave to use these, but modestly forbids the publication of her name.

In the first she tells me that before the Act of 1834, many parishes had their own local "Poor Houses," for orphans and the aged, and parishioners of a certain standing were compelled to accept a certain number of children from the Poor House as apprentices to be fed, clothed and trained. If a man did not himself want apprentices he had to find one who did and who would be responsible for his orphans.

This lady also tells me the origin of the word "Hackney riding," or "to ride hackney," meaning to ride on horseback. For years this used to puzzle me. I would ask, "Has Jem ridden to town?" They would reply, "Yes," and I would subsequently discover that Jem had driven in a cart. At other times, I would ask if Jem could bring out a parcel for me and be told, "No," because he was riding hackney. At last I learnt that "riding" is to drive and "riding hackney" is riding on horseback. But having sorted the two achievements, I never understood the reason for the definitions. Now it seems that the word "hackney" is used to describe a certain breed of horse suitable for long journeys, in such a way as we should, for instance, use the word "cob" now.

My friend asks if I have ever seen the North Devon warranty for a pony. "Car drink, smell a pucksey, not cocky at a galbybagger."

I prayed for a translation, which was duly sent. "Carry a drunken man safely; is very sure-footed; and not inclined to shy."

A "pucksey" is a hole or bad place in the moor, which a clever pony won't go into. The real meaning of "galbybagger" is disputed, so it is now taken for anything which would startle a horse.

This lady's father was once discussing a new preacher with a shrewd old farmer who said, "I liked 'en pretty well, sur, but he dieth away tarbul at the end of his sentiments," which criticism has now become a family idiom to describe people who do not make the ends of their sentences audible.

Only sixty years ago, this same gentleman's first case at Exeter Assizes concerned some "overlooking" at Ottery S. Mary, where a "White witch" was said to have ill-wished some pigs. People must have believed very firmly in witchcraft to take such cases into court.

This generous friend concludes her last letter by giving me the copy of a cobbler's bill sent to them in the 'eighties.

"To holing and souling Miss Rosman"
(*i.e.* Rosamund).
"To souling Maister Said's bouts" (*i.e.* Sidney).

Lately I was discussing moles with a small boy who traps them for his farmer daddy. I asked him if he sold the skins, and he replied, "Yes, I did, back along. But they'm slipping their jackets just now."

"Slipping their jackets" strikes me as the quaintest explanation of moulting that I have yet heard.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE MOORLAND BARBER

Of course, we have no barber in the usual sense of the word.

But we have various excellent substitutes.

The Man-who-made-the-window has been sheared—or shorn, whichever is the more correct English.

Far be it from me to make ribald or personal remarks about so estimable a character, but the style of the Dartmoor barber suggests that of our neighbours at Prince Town more than any other mode of coiffure known to Art.

If you have a man here on a long visit, life becomes unfit to live on account of his hair.

Daily, his temper gets worse and his appearance more that of a mentally deficient. He never will accept local services nor will he walk the six miles each way to the nearest barber. As a rule he is open to a compromise and would walk one way, so we women snatch eagerly at the first passing carriage, pony cart or even farm cart that passes the window, bundle him into it, and have a luxuri-

ous day's holiday, knowing he can't be back before evening. If you are not particular about style and simply want to get rid of hair, you take a walk to a certain farm whence you are politely directed to a certain field where you find an amiable man, for instance, ploughing. You walk beside him to the end of his furrow if you know your manners, because it is wicked to stop man and beasts in an unfinished furrow, and at the terminus you gracefully broach the subject of hair cutting, while he is turning his horses. He always agrees, promptly and cheerfully, makes an appointment for that evening at a certain hour, it being decided that he is to come to you.

At the indicated time, you, minus a collar and plus a towel, await him. He arrives with his sheep shears, from which he carefully takes the customary cork, and sets to work.

He is conscientiously thorough, and, when he has finished, the skin of your head is extremely apparent through a thin haze of hair. This haze, indeed, is so thin that at a little distance it gives you the appearance of being grayheaded.

For this highly efficient piece of shearing he charges twopence if he charges at all, which is seldom.

Mr. Bluejacket informs me that, since he came to live on the moor, his hair does not require

cutting more than once a quarter. From which description of our methods you can draw a logical or mathematical conclusion, or both, according to your temperament. Every man on Dartmoor can farm, therefore nearly every man on Dartmoor can shear sheep. Every man who can shear sheep can cut his brother man's hair.

Then add up the male population of the moor and you get a fairly accurate estimate of our number of hairdressers.

CHAPTER XXV

DARTMOOR PRISON

No, my dear public, I intend to spare you. Your patience has earned respect. You have been peppered with facts about the prison in guide books, nauseated with the Photograph of Convicts emerging from its gate, bored by repeated stories of American and French prisoners of War. I am on my honour and my mettle to write of the moor as an expert and as no one else is in a position to write. (See "Jemmy.")

So I will try to give you the lighter and probably the truer side of Dartmoor prison life, with facts little known and less suspected.

First, let me say that I have a mild grievance about the matter. I cannot understand why, in civilized and up-country circles, the announcement that I live on Dartmoor should always be received as a jest of the *double entendre* style. Do you suppose that all Dartmoor is one big convict prison?

I will give an example of what I mean. Not long ago, I attended a big at-home in the county.

It was a public and civic affair with some three thousand guests present, among them, men of all positions and shades of thought, political and religious. During the course of the evening I met a bishop. After an introduction and a greeting, he asked amiably, "And where do you live?"

I replied "On Dartmoor, my lord."

Instantly, he began to twinkle and remarked, "A very suitable place for you, I am sure."

"Why, my lord?" I asked coldly.

"Because," he responded very demurely but still twinkling, "only the most highly respectable people live on Dartmoor."

As for *Punch!* For him, Dartmoor and convicts are synonymous terms. You know they are, Mr. *Punch*, so don't deny your guilt. And you jested about "The Dartmoor Shepherd" till we danced with rage. It was awfully unfair, because he was a Welshman by birth, and is it our fault if they send Taffys to do time here?

Nevertheless, I have to thank you and I do thank you gratefully for your sonnet, "Vandals on Dartmoor," which, reckless of copyright laws, I here do quote.

> "Greatly the high gods wrought this granite tor,
> Bold, black, bluff-fronted, bending shaggy brows
> On dappled hills where bees in heather drowse.
> They set it there to stand for evermore,

With dimness of pale purple set before,
Steeped in the pomp of silence—not to house
Beef-bloated tourists in debased carouse
Upon its stony knees, its thymy floor.

They come by wagonette, a vandal brood;
They sprawl at leisure—'a great herd of swine
Feeding'; and having fed they strew around
Paper, smashed glass and cardboard on the ground,
Leaving where none but gods might meetly dine,
Foul wrappings and the relics of their food."

When you walked round a Dartmoor window, Mr. *Punch*, with that sonnet, I forgave you all your former prison jests. It is not signed, and several friends sent it to me, with my initials added in ink and a ? against them. There is only one flaw in it, which is that we have no thyme on Dartmoor. It should be turf, not thyme.

And your other merrier little poem about "The Cottage." It might almost be one of the Rainbow Maker's cottages, only that her roofs are thatched, not slated. This verse describes us—

"Creatures people the wood at night;
Peaceable animals come and play;
Pan's own pipes, if you hear aright,
Charm you on as you go your way;
And all the Arcady folk of yore
Make songs of the day that used to be,
Which carry perhaps to the cottage door,
The cottage that doesn't belong to me."

The question I *am* asked *ad nauseam* is this: "Don't you find it very depressing living so near

a big prison?" Well, I try patiently to explain that it is several hours' journey to the said prison, and that Dartmoor is rather a roomy place consisting of quite several acres. And then my horrid habit of always liking to get to the bed rock of all things leads me to ask why a prison should be a depressing object and to spin yarns about prisons which electrify the pious questioners.

I never can see that a prison is a sad object. A lunatic asylum, yes, or a workhouse which shelters much helpless suffering. But a prison is surely a bracing sight. It contains only the people who deserve to be there. Justice is at times said to miscarry. I have never met a case where it has done so, and nearly every healthy-minded prisoner will tell you that he or she earned the sentence. Prison is supposed to be degrading. It is not half so degrading as crime. A man has deliberately degraded himself before he reaches prison at all. Besides, our prison system in England is not degrading. It is humane and reformative before being punitive.

The general public picture our Dartmoor convicts as being ill-clothed, ill-fed, bullied by brutal warders, confined always within prison walls, or, if let out for exercise, either shackled by the leg or handcuffed together.

Occasionally, I visit Prince Town, taking with

me an ignorant and eager foreigner, and I time our arrival for the after-dinner hour when the gangs emerge again to the farm.

One piping hot August day, I took a man who had never seen a prison or a convict. I planted him outside the big gate and in due course the men came out in their short jackets, knickerbockers, and Scotch bonnets. They were not, of course, secured in any way and they marched up to the farm, had a drink each before setting forth, and then, having shouldered scythes and grinning from ear to ear, they tramped off to the hay fields. My friend was astounded at their appearance and their liberty. Certainly, you could not have seen a more sunburnt, or healthier or jollier-looking set of men in England. So far from being always shut up, except for eating and sleeping, a large proportion of them is never indoors at all. They have a big farm at Prince Town which is worked entirely by the prisoners, and this includes butter making and a certain amount of cattle and pony breeding.

They are well clothed and well fed, for they have two resident medical officers and sickness in any form is jealously guarded against. In the autumn, the more delicate men are weeded out and sent down to winter at Parkhurst in the Isle of Wight. We mere respectables have to stay and rough it

on the moor. And we can't afford to keep resident physicians.

There are "schoolmasters" attached to every convict prison who teach the men reading, writing, arithmetic, and other things. These schoolmasters have also charge of the library, which contains a varied assortment of books, including novels, and certain current periodicals are now allowed to the men. There is a Church of England and a Roman Catholic chapel with resident chaplains, and the prisoners are allowed visitors and correspondence with certain restrictions. There is a system of marking for good conduct by which a man may both shorten his sentence and earn money at the same time, so he can, if he chooses, leave prison with a nice little nest-egg.

It must be remembered, also, the class from which the average criminal comes. Of course, sadly enough, there is a proportion of gentlemen in every convict prison, but there are also a number of men who have never before had a bed to lie on, food to eat, clean, decent clothes to wear, or any chance of learning a trade and winning their own self-respect by habits of discipline and industry.

And this manly life of self-reformation has a lighter side. For instance, I am told that on first entering one of the big prison "halls," as they are called, your impression is that you have somehow

made a mistake and got into an aviary. You are greeted by the chirping, twittering and singing of innumerable birds.

These "halls" are big places with glass roofs, a staircase in the centre, and galleries running round them out of which the cells open. The wild birds make their way in through the skylights and become amazingly tame. The prisoners love them passionately, save crumbs for them and, in time, the birds will eat out of their hands. While they are out at work, the cell doors are left open, and sparrows and robins hop from cell to cell, gratefully picking up the crumbs that their big human friends have left for them. A sweeter thing still is the prison mice. The men find field mice while they are working in the open and bring them home. Each man has a shelf in his cell whereon he ingeniously contrives a little lodging for the mouse, which apparently never tries to escape. It is fed on bread soaked in cocoa. Perhaps, in some silent, mysterious way, it understands and appreciates the tenderness and affection lavished on it. Any way, the mice seldom escape and, in time, become perfectly tame. Sometimes the men take them out in their pockets, at other times they are left, uncaged, in the cell, where no harm appears to befall them. Now and then a convict who has had misfortunes with his mouse and craves for

companionship, will steal the mouse of another man, and frightful trouble ensues. Some of the men, on the other hand, are generous and will give a mouse to a fellow sufferer, while they are freely bartered for such treasures as a cigarette end picked up when passing down the road to the fields. Of course, smoking is not allowed and tobacco is forbidden in the prison, but what poor convict could resist a cigarette stub that chance places under his very feet? It will buy almost anything in the shape of a prison treasure, and is slowly chewed as it may not be smoked. Some of the men breed mice. These are usually what are, quite without unkindness, known as the " balmies."

Special attention is paid nowadays to mental deficiency, and there is a special section for feeble-minded men at Prince Town, who are called by their mates and by themselves " Balmy."

One such will describe himself, with a sweet smile, as a " balmy," and one of these " balmies " is a past master in the art of rearing baby mice. He will have a family of eight tiny atoms whom he tends as a mother tends her babe, and he knows to an hour when their little eyes will open.

I may mention that I never heard of either birds or mice in the female convict prisons, from which it may be argued that men have hearts and women have not. On the other hand, a mouse is the only

animal that can be kept without difficulty or annoyance in a prison, and the lack of female convict mice may be due to the universal feminine terror of the race. For the honour of my sex I hope this is the explanation. Better to be a coward than heartless. "Of two ills choose the least," as our Devon ware china motto says. For various reasons Prince Town is a unique place. For one thing it possesses the highest railway station in England. For another, it is the capital town of Dartmoor. For a third, there is no other prison so large and so far from outside assistance.

If a serious mutiny were to occur, no outside assistance could be procured from the place itself, and there are usually about a thousand convicts "in residence."

At times, the men escape. They live so much out of doors and our fogs are so sudden and frequent that escape is comparatively easy at its beginning, though it never can possibly lead to anything but suffering, exposure and thankfulness to be re-taken.

I remember once lunching with a governor of the prison. He had the finest set of barometers, thermometers, wet bulbs and dry bulbs, that I ever saw in one place. Once or twice during lunch he apologized in a low tone and went over to watch the mercury. They don't like a sudden fog with

many of their men out, and a conscientious governor watches the weather like any skipper or probably more anxiously. The result of a convict-escape upon our village is the immediate appearance of our constable in plain clothes. He only wears uniform when nothing special is happening. As soon as you see him in mufti you know that something grim has occurred or is going to occur. The idea is, you see, that he should be both detective and policeman. The appearance of him in plain clothes strikes terror to the nervous women of the place. They infer at once that one of "they felons" is loose again. In vain the Rainbow Maker and I try to assure them that no escaped convict would ever come out here so far from the railway, and that, even if they or he did, convicts are really very nice persons. The state of terror among the women is such that there is no reasoning with it. Their only solace is to bolt, lock, and bar their houses at every crevice. The unknown is always great. Few of the women have ever even seen a convict, so their terror of them is colossal.

A tenant of ours once remarked bitterly during an escape that he would be some thankful when the durn man was taken, for the house was that fastened up every night by his own nervous wife, he had to rise half an hour before his time to get past the

barricades out into the open. He was not trying to be funny. He did not even know he was being funny. He was an irritable man and he simply voiced his grievance.

We live in rather a long state of siege here, because news of the recapture always filters round slowly.

As a rule, the sight of the constable once more in uniform assures us that all is correct once more.

The mention of the word "correct" recalls a funny custom they have at Prince Town. As the governor meanders about from block to block, the sentry warders have to salute or present arms or stand at attention or all three, and remark, "All correct, sir." The governor always receives the statement with a cold lack of interest, and I have at times flippantly wondered what he would do if any man were ever brave enough to say "All INcorrect, sir"—and throw up his berth.

I have heard some quaint stories from prison governors.

One told us he felt an absolute brute when discharging one prisoner, for the man implored, with tears, not to be sent away to a town again. Another man begged to be kept till he had finished a piece of carriage building in which he was keenly interested.

The elderly chestnut about the old scorcher who was a genius with sheep and passionately attached

to them is well known by now On being discharged he remarked gloomily to the warders who were present, "I know you fellows can't be trusted with that old ewe. I shall have to do something and get back at once." And he did.

A funnier story is about an escaped convict. As they mustered one afternoon to return to tea, the warders noticed that a man was missing. They got the rest of their flock safely under lock and key, then gave the alarm. The bell was rung and a search party set out with rifles and their cartridge belts. In about half an hour's time the "escaped" convict arrived at the prison gate at a quick trot, in a towering passion, shouting that he wasn't going to put up with their fool-tricks and why on earth couldn't those durn idiots of warders do their work and bring a respectable convict home to his tea in a proper manner instead of leaving him out at the far end of a deep ditch? By now, he supposed his tea was cold, and he should report the warders to the governor for their idiotcy.

CHAPTER XXVI

DARTMOOR CHILDREN

ROUND past the Dartmoor window comes a "small, sweet-spirited friend" of the Rainbow Maker's. He smiles in over the hyacinths and continues his way.

Last Christmas, he was in some trouble concerning Father Christmas himself. It should be explained that Father Christmas does not visit the moor in daylight or in visible guise, but he does attend Christmas Market away in one of the towns. He is not above adopting modern methods of transit, and he leaves his reindeer and sledge in safe keeping on arriving at the town, so as to avail himself of a motor car in which he darts about all day showing people the way to the Christmas bazaar. It is surmised that he himself buys up all the stock after closing time so as to have plenty of presents for stockings on Christmas Eve.

Small Cyril's troubles began with his daddy, who is a shocking tease. Daddy heard much discussion about hanging out stockings for Father Christmas, and suddenly announced that they

would not be large enough to hold anything worth having, and if Father Christmas came down to find insufficient space provided for his gifts it made him angry and he went away, leaving nothing at all behind him.

Here was a shock. Cyril debated and then decided to borrow a pair of Daddy's socks till it was explained that these had no legs worth speaking of, so he would be no nearer providing adequate space.

He debated again and then consulted his mother as to whether it would be etiquette to hang up his breeches, which would hold quite a lot. "Us could tie up the knees so's the presents wouldn't drop out, couldn't us, Muther?" he asked, harassed. His mother thought Father Christmas would quite understand, so that solemn point was settled.

Then Daddy chimed in again and wanted to know how Father Christmas was going to get in.

"Down the chimney," Cyril informed him—a very easy matter on Dartmoor where the chimneys are so large.

"I bain't going to have anyone getting in down my chimney," said Daddy conclusively. "I shall till a few gins on the hearth on Christmas Eve to catch anyone who cometh down."

Here was a more horrible problem than ever. Cyril went to his mother again, much distressed.

She comforted him by saying Daddy didn't mean it, and if he did she would come down on Christmas Eve, after Daddy had gone to bed, and take the gins away.

The final riddle was then left to solve: how could Father Christmas know that Cyril wanted a train more than anything else on earth for Christmas? Suppose Daddy didn't see Father Christmas to market or hadn't mind to tell him? It would be too late to leave a note pinned to the breeches on the very eve itself, because there might not be a train in his sack. Notice ought to be given beforehand. At this crisis it transpired that the Rainbow Maker was a friend of Father Christmas's, and had mentioned the matter to him.

Evidently her introduction was a good one, for Cyril, to his intense joy and relief, received a letter from Father Christmas, on Christmas market day, running as follows—

No. 1 Golden Square, Bright Star.

Father Christmas presents his compliments to Cyril and has much pleasure in stating that he will bring what is required on Christmas Eve.

It was thrilling to get Father Christmas's address, and Cyril could immediately rattle it off like a lesson to anyone who asked for it.

When he awoke on Christmas morning, the train

was there. Father Christmas had not forgotten and the breeches were the proper thing, and Daddy hadn't tilled his gins, or, if he had, Mother had removed them.

With the train was another letter from

No. 1 Golden Square, Bright Star.

Father Christmas presents his compliments to Cyril and says that if the train is taken care of and not broken up by next December, probably a signal box and a level crossing and railway tickets with inspector's punch will follow.

After that, Cyril used to pick out the biggest, brightest star when it grew dark after tea, and kiss his hand to Father Christmas who lives up in it.

So that matter ended happily.

The Rainbow Maker has another little friend called the Brownie. I happened to pass her home this afternoon and I saw her taking in the washing for mother. The drying ground is wondrous picturesque where the little Brownie lives. It is flanked on two sides by groups of fir trees above which rise the russet slopes of the moor crowned with a dim gray tor. The yard was steeped in pale sunshine and the Brownie had on a gray frock and a pink print pinafore.

It is not easy to take in washing when you are not more than three feet high. It's amazing when

you get under it, how a clothes line flies high above your outstretched arms. It looks quite low when you first start out to it but it seems to get higher as you approach it. Blackberry branches have a way of doing this, too, only they grow in hedges and you can always scramble up a bank after they. But when a clothes line eludes you, it is very difficult to know what to do, because it is never near a bank. The Brownie stood for a minute, debating. Then, in the very centre of the drying ground, she spied a huge, friendly looking gray boulder with a smooth, level top.

Boulders are such accommodating creatures and adapt themselves to so many uses. They make delightful counters when you play shop, and they have little holes in them where the shopkeeper can keep her stock such as acorns and wild rose berries. In one of our kitchens, there is a boulder which rises up through the stone floor like a small couchant pig, just at the higher end of the long bench with the oak back that is built into the wall. This boulder does very well for a footstool.

So did the other one this afternoon. The Brownie took hold of the lower end of an apron and stepped with it upon the boulder. This drew the line towards her, and by standing on the very tips of her small square toes she succeeded in drawing out the clothes pegs and getting quite a number of

articles off the line, which she put over her shoulder lest they should drag in the dust. Still, when you are only three feet high, it is not easy to prevent things from draggling, so she was obliged to double some of the articles over her shoulder twice, and altogether it was very hot, anxious work.

Father Christmas visited Brownie last December and left her a post office. There were telegram forms, a postmark which was Punch's head instead of the king's, notepaper, envelopes and postage stamps. Brownie wrote and posted to the Rainbow Maker the very first letter that ever passed through this remarkable post office, and I was honoured by the second one. The envelopes are about two inches square and the stamp is the size of a small dice. Purple ink is used in postmarking, not black. Brownie is a wonderful scholar, as it behoves all good post-mistresses to be, and I transcribe two of her letters just to show what a very wise selection Father Christmas made in giving her a post office.

DEAR MADAM,

I am just writing these few lines to wish you many happy returns of the day and to thank you very much for my Easter Present which I am very proud of I have shown it to my little friends and they think it very pretty I was quite frightened

when I saw it on Easter Morning and Granny was thinking it was hers. Now I hope you are better for your change and Hope to see you soon

From your loving freind

BROWNIE.

P.S. Give my love to Miss Beatrice.

Don't you call it really swagger to use a P.S.? What do mere full stops matter compared with that?

The present referred to was a wooden toy hutch containing a hen and a nest full of sweet eggs, and when the door was opened the hen jumped out with a cluck. Whether this was left by Father Christmas in the Rainbow Maker's charge till Easter I cannot say. That is a matter between Father Christmas and the Rainbow Maker.

Another letter says——

DEAR MADAM,

Just a few lines in answer to your letter I hope you are better than you were when I heard from you I am sorry have not answered your letter before as I have been practising for the concert and now it is over I have a little time to spare. The takings at the door and the sellings of the programmes amounts to £5. 7. 0 and a kind friend gave us a £1 note Miss Beatrice kindly done all the programmes for us on her typewriter which we were

very proud of Granny has been poorly since I last wrote to you and was in bed ten days but I am glad to say she is better again now I must close as it is bedtime

From your loving little
BROWNIE

The Brownie is a very motherly little person. I think she catches it from Granny. When the Rainbow Maker goes to church, Brownie comes out with her to see her off in her chair and tucks in the rug all round, just as she does when she puts her dolly to bed.

Brownie has, for some years, been collecting articles against that day when she will set up housekeeping for herself. She has a box in her own little room into which go any likely things desirable in housekeeping.

The women and children were once all drawing for prizes at one of the Rainbow Maker's tea parties. Brownie happened to draw the slip marked "Prize," and then she had to choose. There is always a selection. She promptly decided on a tea cosy, though her granny frivolously recommended a pretty waist-belt. Brownie was calmly superior and utterly impervious to temptations of personal adornment. She explained to Granny in a stage whisper that she wanted things for her house, and a waist-belt was no use in furnishing.

So she took home the cosy in triumph, and put it carefully into her sacred box whence no one was allowed to remove it, and she resolutely refuses to lend it to Granny even for very important tea parties.

"Lil maids yere about," in many other cases, begin to collect, in this manner, for their wedding day. Another small maid of my acquaintance is going to have eight daughters when she grows up—no sons, because she doesn't care for boys—and she has already provided a very old umbrella without a handle and a prayer book without a cover for their future use.

Really, anything is worth saving, she explains to you, because anything can be mended if you've a mind to get it done.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE GOOD TREE

I AM sitting in the window to write today, for the rain descendeth.

By the way, that biblical mode of ending their verbs with 'th' is very fine. 'Cometh,' 'goeth,' 'saith,' 'runneth,' are all words in common use here. "Looketh like rain" is an ordinary phrase.

The Rainbow Maker is sitting by the fire with her back to me, reading the last chapter of this book—the preceding chapter would perhaps be a more correct expression. She reads each as the pages are poured out by my typewriting machine and says she lives in a sort of flutter, because at times I saunter off, with a loafing air, and return, inside of an hour, with a new chapter.

The Rainbow Maker was very ill when she returned last week, and she says she shall never forget what it was to have reached home on the moor at last, to lie in bed, warm and out of pain, and to have a new chapter brought up to her every two hours or so.

Then she says rude things or contrariwise about each production as the spirit moves her.

In some ways, it must be interesting to live with an author. The making of books is an interesting trade. I once showed galley proofs to a lady whom I met only for a few days. Her mystical appreciation of anything so mundane shamed me, especially as too generous reviewers credit me with possessing much mysticism.

My friend pounced on the wriggling messy mass of galley proofs and exclaimed: "Oh, it's too wonderful. There is a book in the making. That is its first stage, infancy, so to speak. And its next is to get into pages. And then illustrations. And then real printing on good paper. And then the binding. It's wonderful. You don't mean to say you are going to destroy these?"

I murmured, abashed, that such had been my unimaginative intention, but that if she liked to have them I would make her a free gift of them.

I own there must be a lack in my composition. For instance, a certain museum overwhelmed me with honour by asking for the original of *The Heart of the Moor* to preserve in the county archives. I was absolutely stunned. When I recovered, I confessed that I had burnt it the day I got second proofs, because it never, in my wildest nightmares, entered my head that anyone could

possibly want the manuscript any more than it ever occurred to me what wonderful things galley proofs are.

And then the storm that ensued! I was cursed in different keys by the curator of the museum, the Rainbow Maker, my publisher, by everyone who got to hear of. They all told me that, for a person professing to have brains, my behaviour was intolerable.

I felt I deserved it and took it all lying down.

They have, however, forestalled me about this manuscript by cautions and threats. I meekly suggested to the curator that there are certain other authors in whose company I should be sorry to be seen—if he makes a habit of collecting original MSS. He assured me that a special room should be built for mine, so I have promised it.

This particular man is also a great archæologist, and when he first wrote to me he said his *antiquarian* instincts had prevailed and caused him to trace out my address. You see the point? Fossils and prehistoric remains cannot be hid from him. Since then I have always called myself "the Fossil."

Some reviewers and certain publishers' readers aren't half as sharp as this curator. He recognized me at once as a seasoned hand, whereas some few reviewers have patronizingly patted me on the

head and told me that if I try hard enough and keep on long enough I certainly show promise. I have laughed at those. The majority of reviewers, however, are with the curator. They agree that I am a seasoned fossil, hardened to book writing, inured to reviews, feeding without dyspepsia upon acres of proofs, galley or otherwise.

On the other hand, life with an author has its disadvantages. I try to keep my trade well in the background, for I have no patience with any form of affectation, and because you write books, there is no reason to be untidy, forgetful or unpunctual. Now and then, however, exigencies do occur, and one of our interiors, upon a certain afternoon when I had been finishing and packing a MS. to catch the American mail might well have been photographed and called "Life with an Author."

If it is ever again possible wilfully to rummage up the room into the state it was in that day, I am going to have that photograph taken and paired with the same interior as "Life without an Author."

The Rainbow Maker has just left her seat beside the fire and, with my preceding chapter, has limped majestically over to her desk to make corrections in it. My blood slowly curdles when I see the Rainbow Maker at work on any MS. of mine. It is fearsome.

She has now upset a pile of books into an inaccessible position behind her davenport and is mournfully fishing for them with a crook-handled stick. I shall have to interrupt myself to go to the rescue, and as I did not sit down with the intention of writing all this nonsense, I will break off and in a decorous manner turn out the chapter I originally meant to write.

I have just examined the chapter as corrected by the Rainbow Maker and have murmured to myself—

" ' Pepper, mostly,' said the cook.

" ' Treacle,' said a sleepy voice behind her.

In other words, the Rainbow Maker has done nothing worse than pepper me with commas. The orifices of our pepper-pot happen to be comma shaped and it also happens that I have cleaned it this very afternoon because the Rainbow Maker complained, at lunch time, that it wouldn't pep, and I fancy myself at such tasks more than both bluejackets together.

She has spared me any treacle—beyond saying that it's, so far, the best chapter in the book.

But she has complained more than once of my lack of commas. I explain that, like Five, I always lay the blame on others.

Compositors are stamping out the comma. In

my pre-fossil days I used to write on the front page of every MS.—

NOTE TO COMPS

Please set up this MS. without alterations of punctuation.

And then, when they altered all the punctuation, I slew them with red ink. Now I admit that life is too short for this, so I weakly let them exterminate the comma, and I bear without a tremor such sentences as, "Laura walked on her head a little higher than usual."

The Rainbow Maker has now read this chapter. How, I ask, am I ever going on with the book at this rate?

And she says she has corrected not only my lack of commas but my spelling. In the preceding chapter you will perceive that, on the subject of Father Christmas, I found it necessary to use the word "chimn"—there I stick. I shall never never never know how to spell the word "chimney" in the plural. I always leave it to the compositor. It's the 'y' in the singular that breaks my nerve utterly.

The Rainbow Maker, on the contrary, does know how to spell it in the plural—or says she does. We shall see what the comps think.

There is only one other word I can't spell, and that is " collab——"

I can always get as far as that, and there I have to stop. You know what I mean? It's when two people together write one book.

Luckily, I seldom need to spell it because it's a thing I never do, and if I wanted to, no self-respecting author would be a party to my madness—moor or otherwise.

I remember once writing rather an important letter to " Jemmy "—a letter that needed a reply, and all he would do was to write frivolously back and say, " I love the way you spell collab——"

CHAPTER XXVIII

AGAIN—THE GOOD TREE

THE rain increaseth. All the morning, great gray clouds have been flying to us from the Bell-ever country. First they let fall a few haphazard drops. Then they gradually lowered, opened, embraced the tors, and now we are swathed in fragrant rain-shot mist that is soaking the whole moor.

As I look through the window, all is movement. Not one tiny object is still. Every grass blade is a-quiver upon the Tweed Dog's bank; every ivy leaf in the cheepery is dancing on its stalk; every bare twig and bough in the hedge is waving against the dove gray of the sky.

And I am reflecting upon a proverb and an allegory which I heard this morning.

Out in the fields, I was asking a tenant about a certain dead tree which ought to be cut down.

He explained that every standing tree is the landlord's, but every fallen tree is considered a tenant's perquisite.

"Perhaps, then," I said politely, "we had better leave this one for a bit to see if it falls."

He laughed.

"That one wun't fall—ever. 'Tis dead, and a dead tree 'll stand till Doomsday. 'Tis only a good tree that falls."

I came home pondering. One sees it, as one sees all moorland mysteries, when it is pointed out.

Taking only the superficial view, I assumed that a dead tree was likely to fall. If I had looked long enough at the tree, I might have guessed differently. It hasn't a leaf or a fruit or a berry upon it. Its bare, light, dead branches offer no resistance to the wind. It looks quite likely to stand longer than I do.

On the other hand, a good tree, well developed, laden with leaves and fruits, is heavy. In a gale, it is top heavy, so its very perfection causes its downfall.

How frightfully true this is of us mortals! "Great is the fall thereof" applies to the greatest.

Continually as we go through life we hear it said, "I wonder why wicked people are so much nicer and more loveable than good people? Good people are so dull and narrow and unloving."

Poor wicked people! Perhaps they are like the good tree and have been overset by the very weight of their gifts. Perhaps the so-called good

never have had any gifts or any temptations and survive by a merely negative form of goodness which is unworthy of the name.

For myself, I have always loved the so-called wicked and preferred them to the good. So does the Rainbow Maker. One of her axioms is: "I much prefer sinners to saints."

So I hug the allegory of the good tree and we shan't have that dead tree touched for years.

Whenever I see a poor fallen tree—one fallen by the wayside—I shall hope and believe that Brother Death will come and gather its leaves and flowers and fruits before these wither from the fall, and perhaps, when it is counted up at the Great Harvest, the fallen one may have yielded more than the righteous who never fell.

CHAPTER XXIX

POSTMAN'S KNOCKS

THE postman has been in uncommonly good form of late. He never, at his shyest, requires any encouragement. At his gayest, there is no holding him.

When he is feeling sentimental, he reminds me, with a quaver in his voice, that us have know'd each other, let me say a certain number of years without further figures, and have never yet had one wrong word though we meet twice a day every day in the year except Sunday and Good Friday. My invariable reply to this remark is, "That is entirely thanks to you, not to me. It is accounted for by your colossal patience and good temper." This he always violently denies and I deny his denial. It generally ends by the mail being some minutes late and the postman getting the door shut in his face. I own that is a mean way of concluding an argument, but when you are dealing with a pig-headed man to whom time ought to be an object, any weapon is justified.

He passes here on his way out to the village and

drops what he calls our "stuff," which is a slight saving to him. It is a vast gain to us because it gives us one crowded hour in which to prepare mails for his return. What we contrive to get through in that hour is almost incredible. When you know that yourself or someone else will have to go to the afternoon post, unless you can be ready for the morning one, it does make you some smart.

He has various little ways which are understood by us. For instance, his homeward route is not the same as his outward one. This means that he frequently has parcels for the return detour which it would be sheer waste of labour to carry to the village and back, so he dumps them on us with myriad apologies.

When he is over his maximum, he has satellites who cause him some anxiety. I always ask him if he gets them cheap from Prince Town for that occasion only. They are what he calls "odd men." I agree they are—very odd. There is one who reaches this house in a state of utter collapse. He falls with a crash upon the bank, causing the Tweed Dog to walk off in disgust, undresses, has a general mop up with a red cotton hanky, dresses again, ties the hanky round his neck, rises—and then sees me glaring at him through the window. The most curious thing about these two men is

that they neither of them wear braces. Consequently, I call one "The Belted Earl" and the other "The Gartered Knight."

One retains his nethers by means of a black leather belt, the other has finer and shorter leather belts below each knee.

When the postman returns, I discuss them with him. He is more interested in the Gartered Knight than he is in the other, because he cannot understand the ethics of the garters. He owns it is a hall mark common to men of the navvy class, but he never can understand why.

Then, one proud day, I discovered it—I. Where, I cannot, for the life of me, remember. Possibly it was in some guide book. Anyway, it said that men who do laborious work pull up their nethers slightly at the knee to prevent drag and then garter the gathers. Proudly I communicated this discovery to the postman. He kicked reflectively first with one leg, then with the other, and said he shouldn't be surprised if there was something to be said for the style. However, he has not yet been knighted—or gartered.

One morning, I happened to go out softly in rubber shoes and overheard him saying in lordly tones to the Belted Earl, "You needn't take that stuff on to the village. I shall leave it here till I come backward."

When the Belted Earl had melted away, I said coldly, "Oh, will you? And pray, whose house is this, yours or mine?"

At first, when he began dumping things in here, I used absently to bring them in and proceed to unpack them, which, as they were not ours, naturally led to complications. Now, Mr. Bluejacket guards them. When he sees me walking down the hall, staring fixedly at a pile of parcels inside the door, he says severely, "Those are not yours, Miss." And I come to with a start, and hurry back, blushing.

The purchase of stamps, postcards and postal orders at the door is somewhat intricate because the postman hasn't much stock on him—and never one penn'orth of change. Frequently, you have to give him a list of orders required for the next day, besides money that requires changing and fancy sums for parcels which naturally he cannot weigh at the door. The certificates for registered parcels, such as my MSS., frequently float in after the parcel has been acknowledged by the publisher. When the postman proudly hands me the drab certificate I tear it up under his nose and say, "I have heard from London several days ago about that."

One jest is that he always pretends to forget change. So I invariably begin the day by saying,

"You owe me two shillings," or whatever the sum may be. He shakes his head sadly and says, "There is never any chance of turning an honest penny here, Miss. You never forget anything." Some days, when I am very hard up, I say, "Let's see. Don't you owe me something this morning?" He always violently denies it and, one day, as he was seated on the step, disgorging "stuff," he moaned out, "How I *am* robbed at this house!"

The other day, I gave him a coin and a packet for which sixpence change was required, remarking, "You aren't worth sixpence, of course. It will do tomorrow," when, to my amazement, with an air of speechless disdain, he produced the sixpenny piece from his leather pouch and handed it to me in silence.

I clamoured for explanations. He drew nearer, looked round to see that no one was within earshot, and murmured confidentially, "The fact is, M'm, I met a weaker man than myself upon the road this morning."

I found the cheque cashing system, as described in my last book, too intricate for constant use, so I now compel this downtrodden postman to cash my cheques for me.

The system is a weird one, but as it causes him apparent satisfaction, I obey him without a murmur. When I first asked him to undertake

the job for me because he lives in the same town with my bank, my idea was that I should write cheques to "self," endorse them and get him to cash them at the bank for me. I cannot now see anything wrong with this mode of procedure. But then, the Rainbow Maker says she never can think why any self-respecting bank has anything to do with me considering how I behave. I don't know what she means, because I very seldom overdraw, which is what most annoys a bank, I believe. And I always sign my cheques. And I always endorse other people's cheques to me. All I do is to ask the manager to write my balance in pencil each time he makes up my pass book. Some managers do this, I believe, unasked. No one could expect me to know how much balance or contrariwise I have got in, because you never know when people are going to pay in cheques. There was one man to whom I had to pay cheques regularly and he usually sat on them for six months before paying in. Then, when I flattered myself I was cleared up for a quarter, one of his cheques would come wriggling in and upset my whole term. When this palled, he used to avail himself of my "order" cheque to transfer it to someone else, and I never knew where it would next turn up. Well, was it my fault if such things happened to me? The Rainbow Maker, who deals with a

swagger London bank, doesn't know what it is to pay cheques as I do to local talent. The only other confusion was that I preferred my pass book to live at the bank. The manager, on the other hand, preferred it to live with me. Before I discovered this, I used to keep on sending it back to him and he used to return it patiently without any particularly striking entries. Then at last he explained that it was to live with me till applied for. The managers have a quaint idea that I understand pass books, and all the imaginary sums that float along at the tops of each page that have nothing whatever to do, so far as I can see, with either my debit or credit. There was a certain thirty-six pounds that haunted me for six months. Whatever I paid in or drew out, still that thirty-six pounds appeared. It got on my nerves to such an extent that at last I thought of closing my account to get rid of it. Before doing so, I confided in the manager, by letter, and asked if he could take it out and drown it for me instead. He said he never laughed so much in his life as he laughed at my letter, and explained the banking system—which left me in a worse fog than ever.

Well, I don't pretend to understand the ethics of banking, but it seemed to me an easy way of cashing cheques, the method I have suggested. It did not, however, commend itself to the postman.

He said if I would make the cheques out to his name he would prefer it. I do so and he arrives next morning with the cash. It seems to me that if persons made cheques to me, by my name, I should vanish and never be heard of again. Why should I? I continue to suggest to the postman that he is missing the chances of his life, but he differs. Then I burrowed into the reason why. It gives him and his bank more trouble in entering imaginary cheques as real ones. It gives my bank the trouble of collecting them. One day he gave me the reason, which was that his account at his own bank is in such a chronically low state that when he has to pass it, he lies down and squirms past the window like a snake. Now that he pays in my cheques, he is able to walk by like an ordinary man, which saves considerable exertion on his part.

As I have already explained, the postmen here are invaluable public servants. They really do a large business in town for the inhabitants of this village.

One of the quaintest things was the arrival in town of a stag for a farmer here. It was a live bird and it came by train in a hutch. No cart was going out that week. What could be done with it? As usual in every difficulty, the postman was approached. Cheerfully, he agreed to meet the cock, pay its fare, rescue it from the custody of the

Great Western, take it home with him and board and lodge it till a cart should be coming out. He did so, and it was eventually my proud lot to become responsible for the next move. I happened to be sending a victoria to meet visitors and bethought me of the cock. I mentioned it to the postman on his outward journey and he agreed to forward the cock by my victoria. I explained that he would first have to find and instruct the driver before he left town, which he of the mails quite understood. And in due course, the cock arrived, in extremely good repair and bearing testimony in every way to the postman's efficiency as a poultry keeper. How such transactions are ever settled up financially, or if they ever are, I know not.

This postman can tell some funny stories about the old men of the moor. He once had to take to one old couple, *the* registered letter of their lives. The old man had never before seen one. The postman, in due course, presented the green paper for "signature of recipient." The recipient looked at it nervously. His old wife made no secret of her views concerning it. She warned him in no uncertain terms that it was sheer madness at his time of life to sign any paper which he did not fully understand. It would be signing away his liberty. She continued to scold and the postman to entreat, and when the postman eventually

won the battle, she said, "Well, John, so sure as I sit yere, yu'll go up the line for this morning's work, and when you do, don't 'ee look to me for pity." "Going up the line" is their expression for being sent to prison. It is due, I think, to the fact that the county gaol is at Exeter. And, according to the postman, that old woman has lived, ever since, in the expectation of her husband's arrest.

Now and then, the postman has an argument about the time. That is a subject on which we all argue, without exception. When I ask for it, I say, "Can you give me fresh, new-laid time? I don't want stale time, a week old, or any fictitious and highly coloured rumours on the subject. If you haven't got the real thing I'll go without till tomorrow." According to his ability, he gives it or not, as the case may be.

But it's the old men of the "John" type who are the most positive on the subject.

They will correct the postman any day. John will proudly draw from his pocket a huge "timepiece," as he calls it, in a celluloid case which he opens with much difficulty to display a watch that must have been used by neolithic man on Dartmoor.

"There," he remarks, with an air of finality. "That be my great-granfeyther's timepiece, that be. And that time, he was brought out to me by Mr. Willcox three weeks agone last Wednesday

from market. When you want right time, young man, I've a got it."

Our telegraphic system still flourishes too. Rather more so than usual, if anything, because the young telegraphist or telephonist, whichever is the correct term, has decided that I require a keeper. She has apparently been doing a rough estimate of what I spend during the year in telegrams, and has decided that I waste much money on superfluous words. So she kindly censors my wires for me, taking out words which she knows are superfluous so as to bring the message within the sixpenny limit. Then she severely returns me odd coppers and shows me the censored form and how greatly improved it is in style.

I meekly thank her, take the coppers hesitatingly and depart, pondering. Her chief dislike is prepositions. These she considers entirely superfluous in a telegram at any time.

She is also severe with me on the subject of numbers. If I am wiring a train or a sum of money, I always write the numbers. She transforms them into figures for me because the post office takes figures at so many a penny.

After a time of this chastening, a bright thought occurred to me, which was to send some of my wires in Latin. Latin, as I explained to her, hasn't any prepositions to speak of.

And oh, my soul! to hear a wire sent from here in Latin. Every word is spelt by means of another word.

On one occasion, I wired felicitations for a birthday—

"Ad plurimos annos."

It was rendered in this fashion—

"A. Got that? Right."

"D. Got that? Right: That's one word. A—d, one word. No, not add. It's nothing to do with sums. A—d, I tell you. One word. Got it? Right."

Next word: "P. No, not 'T,' 'P.' 'P' for Peter. Got it? No, not Peter, P . . . only P."

A long pause.

"Right. Next letter, L—U—R—yes, all the same word. Got it?"

Next letter: "I. No, not 'Y'—'I.'"

A pause again.

"No, not eye that you see with. 'I' for idiot. 'I' for idiot. No, I didn't call you an idiot, I only said, 'I' for idiot. Got it? Right."

After listening several times to this sort of thing I feebly apologized and suggested that it might be better to return to English.

My censor immediately assured me that she much preferred Latin. At first, I thought this was merely politeness on her part. She is unfailingly

polite. But she was so obviously in earnest that at last I craved the reason for her preference.

"Because, Miss, when you send telegrams in English, you write them, and when you send them in Latin, you do them on the typewriter."

I withdrew in absolute silence to think out the insult in all its ramifications.

Till that fell day I had always flattered myself that I write a legible hand.

Even the very postman himself has nothing to say against my handwriting.

CHAPTER XXX

THE DARTMOOR HOUSEWIFE

DURING a recent walk I was waylaid by a farm labourer's wife with the request, Would I walk in, for she had something to show me? She is a woman for whom I have a great respect on account of her thrift and industry. Moreover, she has one of the most fascinating accents in the whole place and, even if the subject-matter of her discourses is not in itself exciting, merely to listen to her speech and inflexion is joy.

So I went into the dear old low kitchen with its stone floor and open fireplace, and was invited to a seat on the settle close beside the blazing logs.

Then, for my delectation and, though she did not know it, for my humiliation, were produced some marvellous garments, fashioned out of two disreputable old flannel dresses of mine which I had given to her at the end of the summer because I thought they would cut up into nice soft dusters. Dusters, floorcloths, and teacloths are great treasures to these clean, thrifty housewives. Such things are expensive to buy specially, and as they

are consequently always made of old garments in some form, they wear out quickly.

However, these were no dusters which were displayed before my shamed eyes.

One dress was pink and the other blue. She had unpicked them with the utmost care and, as every practical housewife knows, unpicking takes much longer than putting garments together. She had unpicked everything, even the smocking, had damped and pressed out all the creases, and had made two beautiful warm bodices, a pink and a blue. It was thick flannel and she showed me with pride how, instead of turning in hems of itself which would have been very bundly, she had faced each hem with new white tape instead. Buttons with beautifully made buttonholes fastened each garment. No such common things as hooks and eyes, mind. They would last her years, she said, for the coldest weather.

I poured out upon her the floods of admiration she deserved. But more miracles were yet to come. The bodices were folded up and put carefully away, then appeared two ample child's petticoats, a pink and a blue, with deep tucks round the bottoms to let down for growing. The bodices to these are made out of some cuttings of striped shirting left over from the " maister's " last shirts. And she showed me how she had put the weakest

parts of the flannel to the very top of the band behind where there is the least wear.

Think of all this labour, the unpicking, planning and piecing in on the part of a woman with all the work of a house on her hands ! I sat abashed at my own comparative idleness and humbly grateful for her appreciation of my very poor gift.

This good housewife is knitting some of the wonderful white quilts so much in favour here. They are made of white cotton and are large enough to cover a double bed. The designs are perfectly beautiful, some being raised shells with elaborate borders and fringe. They last generations and are such a weight, it is difficult to lift them. She began one soon after her first boy was born and it took her ten years to finish it. Now it is done and washed and put away against his wedding day : and she is beginning a second one for the second son. There is quite £5 worth of cotton in each quilt.

I have never seen the style of thing anywhere else and very seldom have I seen anything so warm or so handsome.

This afternoon, I was sitting knitting in the lily bed when footsteps arrived at the door. I called to the unknown who obediently appeared round the corner and turned out to be another humble housewife who had come to inquire after me. I fetched

her a chair and we sat down for a tell in the blazing sun, which she loves almost as much as I do.

Gently, I lured her along the paths of housekeeping modes. She has had seven children, all boys, and to hear her tell of the way those boys have been reared is a volume in itself.

From about the age of three, they are taught household jobs according to their capacity. By the time they are eleven, they can skin and clean a rabbit and cook the dinner. The youngest, who is the most preternaturally sharp imp of all, could make a pasty when he was nine years old. Never since she married has this good woman had to get up to light the fire and cook breakfast. This was always done by her husband till the eldest boy was old enough. Then the duty devolved on each in succession as the one above him went out into the world. Before departing for school, the reigning eldest carries up his mother's breakfast to her room. Wood is got in overnight for the fire. One boy washes up the breakfast things, another sweeps the floor and carries in water. At tea-time, each has a duty to perform and he does it.

This enterprising mother maintains that boys have a much greater natural aptitude for housework than girls. She declares they are gentler, cleverer, stronger and more willing. Not one of her boys has ever been the least trouble to teach.

There is one boy working at a distance who only comes home for the week-end, and I absolutely love calling on her on a Saturday afternoon, rather late, to see her little preparations. In the bottom shelf of the oven, whose door is left ajar, on a large clean dish are his clean underclothes, neatly folded, and a pair of easy indoor shoes. So when he arrives wet, muddy and tired, he slips at once into clean hot garments.

The other lady, she of the flannel dresses, is also a dab at popping her men into dry things. Often, if I have happened to call on her on a wet day, I have seen each man's wardrobe hung over a chair back, all separate, in front of the fire.

Many of the farm labourers here have clean socks or stockings every day. They are naturally extremely clean in every particular, but they pay special attention to their feet, soaking them every night in hot water, sometimes during the ploughing season in salt and water to harden the skin and prevent what they call " bladders," which are what I describe as " blisters."

My visitor of this afternoon had got picture glasses on her nerves.

She seated herself beside me and broke into an eloquent dissertation on the care of pictures. I may mention that I believe her to be the only woman in Devonshire who takes down every

picture in her house every day, even on Sundays, to dust them back and front. If there are other such women I should be proud to know them. She has a special duster for the pictures—a soft old tail of a shirt, neatly hemmed. This housewife never uses an unhemmed duster. They fray in use and in the wash, and she considers unhemmed house-cloths of any kind to be excessively slovenly.

I have never seen a speck of dust or a fly mark on any picture glass in her house. Often when I have dropped in unexpectedly I have been invited to rub my finger along the top of the frames, and the pictures are taken down to let me see that the backs are without one suspicion of spider's web. Many times she has told me what she suffered in her "mind like," during each confinement, from feeling morally certain that there was dust on her pictures and, always, her first act on first getting downstairs was to take out the special duster and crawl round to clean each picture.

Her dissertation this afternoon concerned pictures other than her own. It appeared she had been on a visit to a relative living at some distance, and as soon as she arrived after her long walk, the first thing she noticed were the picture glasses, yellow with smoke. She bore them till after dinner, then collapsed and asked as a favour to be given a clean duster and permitted to operate. Her

hostess was highly propitious at the thought of getting a long, tiresome job done for her, and unblushingly permitted it.

This good housewife had walked six miles out to make the call, having done her housework first. Before starting on her six miles back, with more housework at the end of it, she cleaned every picture in her relative's house.

"But there," she concluded, steeped in Stygian gloom; "her'll never keep 'en like it. Reckon I'll have to go out again soon and see to it myself."

I nerved myself to a confession.

"I am afraid," I admitted, "that no picture in this house would pass your standard. I can honestly say they are only dusted once a week as each room is done, and even then they are not taken down off the walls."

She bore it better than I expected.

"Ah, well," she conceded, "you'm different. If you keep servants what can 'ee expect? I never was in service so I learnt clean ways, and I keep to 'en while I've got a bit of strength left."

With this shaft, she departed, leaving me to ponder over the colossal cleanliness and industry of a woman with seven children who dusts every picture daily. This woman passionately loves flowers and, every day of her life, she changes the water in every vase. Her underclothing is a sight

and would shame many a lady's. Every garment is trimmed with hand-knitted lace made by her self and kept in perfect order.

What strikes me as so beautiful in our women here is their love of cleanliness for its own sake. It is not done for show. It is for their own personal satisfaction concerning points that no second person would even notice.

Another thrifty trick they have is to keep a large bag for cuttings, no matter how small. When they have saved sufficient, they then make them into warm quilts or hearthrugs by stitching each shred of cloth on to stout sacking. These wear indefinitely and wash beautifully. Nothing appeals to them that does not wash.

Till I came here, I did not know it was possible to wash what these women wash. For instance, the men's "cord" trousers are not only washed but boiled, and the women's serge and stuff skirts of every colour are also frequently washed. When you see a woman working in a stuff dress that does not mean it is not a washing dress.

Whatever the material may be it has got to wash. And it does.

CHAPTER XXXI

DARTMOOR ROADMENDERS

After many chats with many craftsmen, I have gathered that roadmending is the most physically painful, especially to the novice. All about the moor, there are the special places where the large rough boulders are piled ready for the industrious hammer. The granite is got out from the moor and carted to these places during the early summer months so the actual breaking goes on in the hottest weather.

It is not the weight of the hammer which is trying. Many tools used by many workmen are heavier. It is the ceaseless jar of the metal on the granite which runs like electric stabs of pain all up the nerves and muscles of the arms. The young roadmender cannot sleep at night for the agony and, each morning, his arms feel drawn and shrunken.

In due time, the worst of this pain and contraction wears off, as the muscles get accustomed to their new work, but to those who serve their fellows by the making and mending of roads,

there is always a certain mixture of pain in their daily cup—which thing is another allegory.

It is wonderful what skill is required in stone-breaking and piling—usually considered as unskilled labour. Many times I have stood at a safe distance to watch them and they have explained how to strike the right way of the stone, with its grain, so to speak, thereby achieving the maximum of result with the minimum of exertion. One thing at which I marvel is the similarity in size of all the stones. In a finished pile, out of the thousands of little glistening knobs of granite, it would be difficult to pick half a dozen different sizes. I plead for the reason of this, and ask them how they can know the size into which a stone will drop at a certain blow. They answer that it is knack and also the precise angle of hitting.

The other thing which fills me with admiration is the intense neatness of their long piles when finished. The stones run in a perfectly even line along the roadway and they slope back to a narrower width on top. This slope prevents landslips. Besides being sloped, they are also buttressed and with flying buttresses too. These buttresses are as even as the rest of the work and might almost be done to measure. The men say they do it all by eye. The reason for the buttresses is that

each can be taken away with spades, when the time comes for throwing the stones over the roads, without the whole pile getting undermined. A large completed stone pile is a really beautiful object, especially where it is flanked by a background of some favourite tor.

My pet stone pile is the one under Rippon Tor near White Gate, and it was at this very spot that a pretty little incident occurred with the roadmender who presides there, day after day, alone in the great solitude.

We had appointed to meet a friend on Rippon Tor, one blazing August day. There had not been time for a reply, so we gave him till a certain hour, after which we were not to expect him.

I took tea for us all—flasks of ice-cold tea in quantities. We walked out over the heather in such a blaze of light and heat as I verily believe is to be found nowhere but on Dartmoor. There was hardly a breath of air, but such as there was came from the north, which intensified the crystal clearness of the atmosphere.

The earth was hot under our feet and we could feel her sweet warm breath caressing our cheeks, while the sun's burning kiss met hers and the union stained us vivid crimson.

We reached Rippon, who was then clothed to his very chin in his regal purple. On all Rippon

RIPPON TOR

From a photograph by Chapman & Son, Dawlish

there is not one speck of gorse. He is robed for one portion of the year in amethyst and wine colour, and for the winter months in deep, soft, rich, seal-brown.

We gave the friend a sunladen half-hour over his appointed time, then decided to scale the tor and spend the evening on his summit.

While we waited, I had been watching the roadmender working alone at his great pile of granite. Before we set out up the tor, it occurred to me that I had a pint of cold unwanted tea which had been intended for the absent friend.

"I wonder if it would annoy him to be offered this?" I suggested hesitatingly to my escort. "They always bring gallons of drink with them."

The escort laughed. "Try him," was all he would say.

"I would rather you did," I was beginning, but he cut me short.

"Spoil a roadmender's idyll? Is thy servant a bear that he should do this thing? I, an unpicturesque fellow-man, to offer him what should be a magic draught proffered by a gentle, white-robed vision——"

Finding him in this mood, I forsook him for the roadmender.

"I suppose you don't happen to want a drink of cold tea?" I quavered. "We expected a friend

who hasn't come, and it would save us the trouble of carrying it up the tor if you could put it away for us."

He dropped his hammer, tore off his goggles, and wiped his streaming face.

"God bless 'ee, ma'am. I be 'most too dry to breathe," he responded, hoarsely.

I unscrewed the flask and turned to my escort for a mug. But the roadmender dispensed with such civilized formalities.

He took the flask firmly from my unresisting hand and drank the pint at one draught. We watched admiringly, and I have seldom heard a more gladsome sound than the grateful liquor gurgling down that powdered throat.

He handed back the empty flask with fervent thanks and said—

"Reckon you seed me in the bogs just now, trying to find a drop of water?"

"No, I didn't. Isn't there water?"

"Not today. The little spring, her'd been getting drier every day, and this morning I found her'd a gone altogether. Tomorrow I must bring more tay."

We had a chat while he rested. He walked five miles to and from his stone pile, he informed us—ten miles in the day. Yes, it was a good job and he was thankful to have it. He was a blissfully

contented roadmender. I asked if he had ever read a book called *The Roadmender*. Not he. He seemed, indeed, to think it was the maddest idea he had ever heard that anyone should write a book about anything so unromantic as a mender of roads.

I tried vainly to show him the ideal side of roadmending. One or two feeble rays of light did dawn on him before I left him. Yes, now I mentioned it and come to think of it, he reckoned it would be a wisht old job, sure 'nough, if us couldn't get doctor when us was ill, or food when us was hungry, or letters when us was in love. I left the rays to brighten, the idea to shoot, which I have no doubt they did. But, as it happens, I have never since seen that particular roadmender.

Curiously enough, this idyll did occur under Rippon Tor, and I append my favourite view of that tor from the white gate side, with the pool and the rushes and the sharp-cut bank where the stone pile stands at certain seasons. White Gate is a little to the left, and before I knew better I used to think that our own beloved and incomparable Michael Fairless really was that particular roadmender under Rippon Tor by the white gate through which her sweet soul finally fled.

Anyway, there remains her wonderful passage

about that tor which I know by heart and go on re-reading—

"In sterner mood, when Love's hand held a scourge, I craved rather the stress of the moorland with its bleaker mind imperative of sacrifice. To rest again under the lee of Rippon Tor swept by the strong peat-smelling breeze; to stare untired at the long cloud-shadow reaches and watch the mist-wraiths huddle and shrink round the stones of blood; until my sacrifice too was accomplished and my soul fled. A wild waste moor; a vast void sky; and naught between heaven and earth but man, his sin-glazed eyes seeking afar the distant light of his own heart."

Ah, if she had only lived to give us a whole book of Dartmoor! It would, indeed, have been incomparable, like every line she ever wrote.

As for her daffodil lyric in the same book, when has such music and form and colour ever been sung and fashioned and painted?

CHAPTER XXXII

DARTMOOR WATER

This is one of our greatest blessings—the quality and quantity of the water supply all over the moor.

We rise the four big rivers of Devon, not to mention many lesser ones, while the small streams and springs are innumerable.

Every farm, however small, has several springs upon it—not merely pools of stagnant water, but running streams which rise in one field and flow through three or four others also.

Water here does not seem to care how or where it rises as long as it gets out and away. It will rise in pasture land or in bog land or straight from the granite. This gives, of course, slight variations in the qualities of the water, though it is all as soft as liquid silk.

The inexperienced stranger thinks us wasteful. Our overplus of water gets on the nerves of those from dry counties. I ask meekly what we could do with it or how we can help it. They never return any but vague answers to such questions.

One lady who was sitting beside our little stream, one evening, at last expressed her feelings. Said she, "I keep feeling that I ought to go and turn the tap off before going to bed. It does seem such awful waste to let it run all night like that."

Oh, but it is a delicious sound in the still midnights, to lie in bed with casement wide and not one sound but the rippling brook! And it is fascinating to go up, after dark, and sit beside the stream in the great velvet darkness that shrouds even one glimpse of the water. It is a creepy sensation to hear water and not to see it. I am not sure that it is not the creepiest sound in nature. One man of my acquaintance says he never dares to go near a river after dark because if he hears the water and cannot see it, he has to go into it. I need hardly explain that this man, when visiting us, is not allowed near the Dart after sunset. If he chooses to lie in the local stream, which is only six inches wide, that concerns no one but himself.

Once upon a time I had a great joy in connection with moor water. It was during the period of our building. Some of our workmen were lodging with an elderly woman near at hand, and one morning I was sent over there with an urgent message. When this was concluded, I noticed the woman

looked very ill and asked if anything were wrong. She replied that she was almost mad with eczema, which had been tormenting her for many months. Her arms were like raw beef, and the most unbearable part of the torture was the intolerable irritation, which began as soon as she got into bed and prevented sleep. The lack of sleep caused indigestion and then her nerves began to go. She was in a pitiful state and the doctors could do nothing for her.

I asked her if she would try a remedy of mine. She agreed eagerly that she would be thankful to. I explained she would probably refuse to, with sneers, when she heard more, because it was nothing in the world but hot water!

It was obviously a shock of disappointment to her, but she kept to her word. I gave her full instructions and left her. Next morning, when the men came to work, I asked if they knew how she was. They said they thought she must have had a good night for she was still in bed when they came away. Rather unnerved, I hastened over. When she opened the door, she promptly burst out crying. "Oh, Miss, how can I ever thank 'ee? I bathed my arms same as you told me at bedtime and got right in bed and slept till nine o'clock this morning without moving. Us haven't had such a night for months."

She continued the treatment, and at the end of six weeks was entirely cured. The sores healed and disappeared and the entire skin became normal.

I have, thank Heaven, cured other cases since, and I want to record the exact treatment for the benefit of other sufferers. Be it remembered that each case of mine had been given up by doctors before I took it on. One man had hands like black horn and was meditating suicide. He, too, was an absolute cure, and for the first time in his life was able to take regular employment.

Well, this is the rationale. Eczema is due, to put the matter in simple language, to a deficient blood supply in the capillary circulation which is close to the surface and affects the skin. What is necessary is to establish a quick and continuous circulation of blood. This is done chiefly by heat. But the re-establishing of the circulation at its commencement causes unbearable irritation if this is done by dry heat such as getting into bed. If, on the contrary, it is re-established by wet heat, such as hot water, there is no irritation whatever and the water also acts curatively upon the actual skin as well as upon the blood vessels just below it.

It is useless to put on ointments or lotions. What is needed is a good blood supply to the affected part.

So much for the explanation of the cure. Now

the way to apply it is as follows : Simply soak the hands or the affected part in water as hot as can be borne for not less than ten minutes at a time, adding boiling water to keep up the heat. This should be done the very last thing at night, and the patient should get into bed at once before the circulation has time to grow sluggish again. If this is done, there will be no irritation to prevent sleep. The treatment can be used several times during the day if desired, whenever the irritation comes on through exercise or dry warmth.

Happily, Dartmoor water is not necessary for a cure. All water cures, but some more slowly than our moor water. In places where the water is hard, and contains lime or chalk, a lotion or an ointment should be used, after each soaking, to counteract the effect of the hard water on the skin. If the lotion is used, I have always found that the very best is the old-fashioned glycerine and cucumber made by Messrs. Beetham. The glycerine is feeding to the impoverished skin and the cucumber is healing. If ointment is preferred, and ointment is preferable in cases where there are open sores, the best is one composed of equal parts of vaseline and boracic powder. It can be made for about sixpence by the patient himself—a spoonful of powder to a spoonful of vaseline well mixed together. This hot-water soaking is also a pre-

ventive and a cure for chilblains and for any other skin trouble arising from sluggish circulation.

I evolved it for myself after an attack of chilblains which made me so ill for want of sleep that I had to consult a doctor, who could do nothing for me. Since I cured myself, I have been curing other people, and if this anecdote relieves even only one sufferer, I shall be indeed blessed. We do not sufficiently realize the extraordinary value of water as a curative. I have never known one failure, even though the cases were hopeless when they began, and I have never known one patient to have one sleepless night from the first night the treatment is begun.

Doctors are most generous to me about my childishly simple method. After the cure of the poor woman here, two medical men came to see me and asked exactly how it had been done so that they might recommend it in future. They were magnanimous to the last degree, and owned, frankly, that they could not have pretended to cure her by any means known to science.

The water that rises in peat bogs is said to be best for drinking purposes. Water rising in granite is thought to contain silica, which is considered bad for rheumatism.

Nevertheless it is the granite water which most allures me, for silica, according to the chemists,

is a matter that resides in all sorts of exquisite productions.

It is a compound of oxygen and silicon and is found in almost all the earthy minerals, and indeed is said to be one of the most frequently occurring substances of which this globe is composed. It occurs, too, in two forms, crystallized or amorphous. In the amorphous state it is opal, garnet and beryl. In its crystal state it is found in jasper, chalcedony, sardonyx, chrysophrase and amethyst.

Where have I heard these names before in connection with one another? Of course! "The first foundation was jasper; . . . the third a chalcedony; . . . the sixth, sardonyx; . . . the eighth, beryl; . . . the tenth, a chrysophrase; . . . and the twelfth, an amethyst."

How sweet that the foundations of the heavenly city should be made of these beautiful things of earth and that one of their chief constituents should be found also in the granite water of Dartmoor!

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE MYSTERY OF BELLEVER

In *The Heart of the Moor* is a certain passage concerning Bellever which I must needs quote to make this chapter coherent. It would be affectation to assume that all my readers knew it.

"I have made a discovery about Bellever; he possesses a feature which, when known about any tor, is always marked on the Ordnance maps. In his case the attribute is not marked and I never intend to disclose the secret lest it be destroyed by profane hands.

He loves me more than any tor loves me, because I alone saw a certain vision of white manhood lying, like a sacrificial victim, upon one of his great altar-like slabs of granite.

Ah yes, Bellever and I have our secrets, one at least of which will be revealed, with fitting glory, when the Recording Angel at last opens his golden scroll.

Only one who ever reads this book will understand the meaning of this passage, and I doubt if even he knows that he alone holds, and always will hold, my heart in the hollow of his hand."

It is a very sweet revelation of human nature that this passage, out of all in the book, should have brought me the greatest number of true friends.

I am sometimes accused of being an optimist and of valuing human nature too high, but what else can I be or do when my fellow mortals are as good to me as they are?

Men and women, hitherto strangers, have written to me and have even visited me about that passage. Their delicacy is immense. They ask no embarrassing question. All they crave is to express comprehension and sympathy as far as there can be comprehension without the knowledge of details.

Much though I shrink from self-discussion, I feel it would again be affectation and worse, ingratitude, not to refer to the matter in this, my next book.

Many of my kind friends have decided that the mystery of Bellever is the unfinished story of a great and unrequited love which is an eating pain in life. It distresses me to have conveyed this impression, for indeed there is no such thing as unrequited love, correctly speaking. Love has a million aspects. One phase is the love which is its own reward: it is the love which burns, unflickeringly, in the sanctuary of a human heart before the sacred and enclosed shrine of the beloved.

The beloved himself may not know of this shrine or, knowing, he may not value it. But to his lover, it is the supreme and immortal power in all life which no circumstance, no misunderstanding can affect.

Some love feeds on reciprocity. Without this, it flickers and dies out. Surely the love which asks no return is greater? Surely, the man or woman who is able to keep alight the immortal flame in perpetual silence and unrelieved gloom is one of the most blessed of God's creatures? The mortal who can maintain this ideal is, surely, to be envied, not pitied?

As dear old Preacher John used to say: "If you are ever disappointed, betrayed, wounded, outcast, love on."

Mind, I am not saying that this is so.

Solely for the sake of all those who have written and spoken upon the subject, I have alluded to it again; and, partly to reassure them, partly to comfort them if it was a fellow feeling, a similar experience, which prompted their sympathy, I venture to express my own passionate conviction on the subject — that love which survives misunderstanding, contempt, even opprobrium, love which subsists without return or reward, is the highest ideal of loving to which the human heart can attain.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE LAST MESSAGE FROM THE DARTMOOR WINDOW

It is Easter Sunday — a glorious Easter day. Since the glad riot of the bells soon after sunrise, everything has been joy and movement. The wind is due west—the most beautiful of all winds on Dartmoor, for it makes the brightest lights and the deepest shadows and the grandest clouds and the softest colours we ever have. How should it not be the most beautiful since it blows to us from the rugged unhewn amethyst of Bellever?

I have been sitting out in front, cuddled into the curve of the old gray wall that shelters us from the east. Straight ahead stretched the low purple reaches of Holne moor. Close in the foreground was a palm tree with its red-brown branches gemmed by floss silk or frosted silver buds; right against it grew an ash with smooth, dull, gray twigs, each wonderfully painted by Dame April with ebon-black. There are hundreds of buds on the tree but she has not missed one, however tiny. Close to this was a "halse" bush with all its graceful yellow lambstails fluttering in the

breeze. The wall beside me was a-glitter with penny-wort, called by Dartmoor children "Penny pieces." The smooth round leaves grow in every crevice and are so highly polished that they look silver in the sunshine, which cannot steal the green from the mosses for these are dull and make gorgeous masses of vivid colour from beryl green to emerald all up along and down along the same wall. They have been cutting brambles or, in local parlance, "paring hedges," and soon after seating myself, I noticed three young sycamore shoots dripping sap. At first I thought it must be rain or dew forgotten by the sun but on looking closer, I found each little branch was pouring out its stream of life blood in quick drops. A Mr. and Mrs. Bluebottle, the first of the season, and clearly a pair of honeymooners, were drinking rapturously from one sycamore stem. They seemed to find the juice so delicious that, out of curiosity, I cautiously tasted it from another branch. It had no flavour whatever—any more than water. Two feet from me, the stream sang its way on to the Dart and thence, beyond the mysterious bar, forth into the more mysterious sea.

Its silvern course was impeded by one little boulder which caused a continuous sprinkle of spray to rise a foot high in the sunshine like a tiny fountain.

Overhead, the bare sycamore boughs made an elaborate brown lacework against the deep blue, flecked with dove-gray clouds.

A wonderful Easter day, three weeks after Mothering Sunday when I began to write this, my book.

I have come in at last, sadly, to face what I always dread—the writing of the last chapter of a book. There is an immense pathos about a last chapter. The thing is completed which has been your constant companion, day and night, for days and weeks. Nothing can recall that sweet companionship. You may write another book but you can never re-write the same book. It has been like a life linked with your own. The last chapter cuts the link and henceforward you have separate existences.

Besides this ineffable union, there has been also the union with you, my many friends, who are awaiting the book and whose love has travelled with me through its new-made pages.

Some of you have re-passed the window many times, during many years, and have smiled in at me as I sit here.

May, you remember that wonderful August twilight when you came to me in the dew-laden hush and put a tiny bunch of late honeysuckle into my hand, murmuring, "To you this is only

honeysuckle. To me, it is my heart." I have that honeysuckle still, and when it finally falls into fragrant dust, I am sure that some kind angel will collect it and take care of it and give it back to me in heaven.

And you, Lily, I wonder if you remember once writing me a letter that described the view from *your* window, your urban window in a noisy street that looked out on glaring bricks and barren pavements? You told me that by arranging the curtains at a certain angle, you could glimpse one little lime tree squeezed in between two high, hideous houses—a lime tree that had been overlooked and was only growing there on sufferance. "At a certain hour in the day especially, a slant of sun strikes it and turns its budding branches into a gauze veil of vivid green. All day long, I thank God for that lime tree."

I have that letter now and I wept over it for many reasons; joy at your sweet contentment and child-like gratitude: at the pathos of your one green possession: and at the unnumbered gifts showered upon my unworthy self.

Now, a more recent letter gives the news of your removal to another domicile. "Oh! what do you think, Beatrice? We shall have a tiny garden. Think of it—a wee garden with a stump of a may tree in it and some creepers. I'm afraid

no sun ever reaches it and high buildings entirely surround it but at least it has air and sky and one green tree. It just thrills me all through even to think of it, cats and smuts notwithstanding. It will be a little oasis in a brick-and-mortar desert."

No sun, the stump of one may tree, and some creepers. Ah, Beatrice, who are you to possess such boundless treasure? A poor fraud at your best.

How you two have always understood my madnesses! I once cut short a visit, with an excuse that I absolutely must be at home by a certain week. I did not give the reason, which was that my hyacinths would be coming into bloom. Yet you, May, understood when I confessed to you, and on your side you admitted that you had done a similar thing rather than miss the sunlight upon a certain picture in your own room, a picture which is only illuminated for a few days every year.

It's useless to tell other people these things. They only think we are mad or ungrateful or unsociable and it gets us hated.

And you, dear generous Rose, who gave me the ball of crystal because I love glass and glitters. I often look into it and see in it one vision only, neither past nor future but the present vision of your precious love.

Then you, man, who gave me the splendid piece of cut glass and filled my room with rainbows, you have travelled with me through these pages.

And you other man who came and pleaded to know more of the mystery of Bellever, thinking, in your generous man's way, that you could unravel the twisted skein for me.

And you, John Oxenham—yes, you too understand. You with what you call your "Little Te Deum of the Commonplace." It is not little but very great. I often use it as a prayer, a glorious litany of pure thanksgiving, with my own special "commonplace" joys added to it—among others the perspective of the interior of this house from door to door, ending as you look through, with a glimpse of moor outside the green gate against which grows a clump of yellow daisies. I always thank God for those daisies.

Well, we know that, some day, Brother Death must come past the window again. He has been once at least during the past year. The day must come when the Rainbow Maker will no longer sit here spinning her beautiful work for others, out of her hours of pain. Another day must come when I shall have written my last book and my last chapter and my last page. Strange eyes will look out from the window and the grass will grow

at last on the Tweed Dog's bank. Please God, those days are still far distant. If not, He knows best.

Meantime, it is left to us to love. That is the one thing which matters, here or hereafter. More than any place on earth, Dartmoor is love materialized. Love stands, eternal in her tors, immovable in her hills, sparkles in her waters, breathes in her every breath, falls in her every raindrop flashes in all her lightnings and throws his own royal robe of amethyst over all her spaces.

Brightest of all are the constant flashings of love from human hearts that fly noiselessly to and fro across the great dusk moor.

A relative of Mr. Bluejacket's has lately been here. He is a wireless naval operator and on his right arm he wears that beautiful badge: a pair of gold wings and two gold zigzag flashes like lightning. It made me think of the equally real and equally invisible flashes of love that you, my friends, and I interchange unceasingly. As you know—you down in the awful towns on the wrong side of my hills—as you know I am always here at my post, and your joys, sorrows, dangers, difficulties, failures are always at my heart.

Long may it be so. Long may you continue to send me the messages from your hearts.

So, as the very last line of my book, I will

turn back to John Oxenham's *Bees in Amber* and take a line from his "Little Te Deum of the Commonplace"—

> "For every wide-flung *window of the soul,*
> We thank Thee, Lord."

THE END

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